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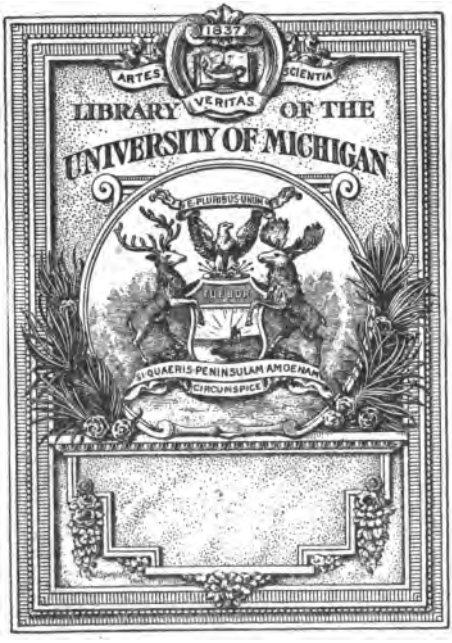


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# WORKS

OF

43495

# SAMUEL WARREN

D. C. L. F. R. S.

VOL. III.

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# PASSAGES

FROM THE

# DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN

BY

SAMUEL WARREN

D. C. L. F. R. S.

WHAT IS NEAREST US, TOUCHES US MOST. THE PASSIONS RISE HIGHER AT DOMESTIC THAN AT IMPERIAL TRAGEDIES.—*Dr Johnson.*

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TO

SAMUEL LILCKENDEY WARREN,

MY ELDEST CHILD,

THIS MY EARLIEST PUBLICATION

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS LOVING FATHER,

THE AUTHOR.

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# INTRODUCTION.

It is somewhat strange, that a class of men who can command such interesting, extensive, and instructive materials, as the experience of most members of the medical profession teems with, should have hitherto made so few contributions to the stock of polite and popular literature. The Bar, the Church, the Army, the Navy, and the Stage, have all of them spread the volumes of their secret history before the prying gaze of the public; while that of the MEDICAL PROFESSION has remained hitherto, with scarcely an exception, a sealed book. And yet there are no members of society whose pursuits lead them to listen more frequently to what has been exquisitely termed

The still, sad music of humanity.

What instances of noble, though unostentatious heroism—of calm and patient fortitude, under the most intolerable anguish that can wring and torture these poor bodies of ours; what appalling combinations of moral and physical wretchedness, laying prostrate the proudest energies of humanity; what diversified manifestations of character; what singular and touching passages of domestic history, must have come under the notice of the intelligent practitioner of physic!—And are none of these calculated to furnish both instruction and entertainment to the public? Why are we to be for ever shut out from these avenues to the most secret and profound knowledge of human nature? Till the attempt was made, in the publication of this Diary, who has sunk a shaft into so rich a mine of incident and sentiment?

Considerations such as these have led to the publication of this work, reprinted from the pages of BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE—a periodical which was the first to present similar papers to the public. Whether the Writer or Subject of them is dead or alive, can be a matter of very little consequence, it is apprehended, to the reader; and no information, therefore, on that point, is requisite. It can scarcely be necessary to say, that the various names which have been pitched upon, in the papers, as those of the writers of this Diary, are *all* of them totally erroneous, and that it has, in particular, no claim whatever to the honourable names of

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"Dr Gooch, Dr Armstrong, or Dr Baillie." It is respectfully suggested, that, if the ensuing pages have no *intrinsic* claims to attention, the deficiency cannot be supplied by the most glittering appendages of name or title.*

In selecting from a copious store of sketches, in every instance drawn from nature—warm and vivid with the colouring of reality—all possible care has been taken to avoid undue disclosures, as far as that end could be obtained by the most scrupulous concealment of names, dates, and places. I cannot close these introductory remarks better, than in the words of the American Editor's Preface to the stereotyped edition:—

"These scenes, so well calculated to furnish both instruction and amusement, have been, hitherto, kept from public observation, as carefully as the Eleusinian mysteries were kept from the eyes of the vulgar. Access is occasionally given to the deathbed of some distinguished character: Addison is seen instructing a profligate how a Christian can meet death; and Dr Young, in his *Deathbed of Altamont*, has painted, in strong and lasting colours, the closing scene of one whose career too nearly resembled the profligate Warwick's. But those in the humbler walks of life have been overlooked, as if men could be taught only by great examples."

* I have not often known of a piece of easier assurance than that of the French translator of these papers, who, not content with rendering them into French, has so paraphrased and misrepresented many of them, and especially the first, that I scarce knew them myself. He calls "Early Struggles," *Le Jeune Docteur;* and I am made to say at the commencement—

"Un Docteur *d'Edimbourg* (!) mort récemment, et dont je dois taire le nom, bien que cette précaution nécessaire puisse engager mes lecteurs à le confondre avec ses personnages fictifs dont les romanciers sont les créatures—ce Docteur, dont l'éducation avait été faite à Edimbourg, ville tout studieuse, et dont le talent s'était développé à Londres, a consigné dans une série de *memoranda*, qui se trouvent entre mes mains, les observations morales, les incidens, les caractères, les tableaux domestiques, dont sa longue pratique lui à fourni les matériaux. Tout est réel dans ces souvenirs; ils ont les inconvéniens et les mérites que cette réalité entraine," *&c.—Souvenir d'un Medecin*, I.

The French reader is further informed, that this paper appeared in *The Literary Gazette.*

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# PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

It is not without emotion that the Author sees, a quarter of a century after the first appearance of *The Diary of a Late Physician*, a People's Edition of it, not only called for, but welcomed to an extent very far surpassing his most sanguine expectations. During that period, a long one, surely, in the life of a book, nowadays, this work has had a great circulation in both the Old and New World, and passed into various languages; the last of which the Author has heard, being the *Bömisch*, or Bohemian. That the work has not been repudiated by the HEART to which it appeals, would seem, from this, to be certain: as also it is, that the Public nobly overlooks errors of detail, when assured of an Author's earnest effort, and honest purpose. He is sensible of many defects in this, the earliest of his works; but has abstained from disturbing a text which has become so long familiar, to so many, in so many languages.

The views taken of this work, in America, France, and Germany, shortly after its completion, may be gathered from quotations which will be found in the Preface to the Fifth Edition, and the Introduction. The author wishes the former to be permanently annexed to this work, as a record of the affectionate respect with which he cherishes the memory of the late Mr Blackwood; and the latter, as an evidence of the Author's views and feelings in composing the *Diary of a late Physician* —those not of a Novelist, but of a MORALIST. While its motto is taken from the writings of our great Doctor Johnson, another *dictum* of his concerning Fiction, has ever been present to the writer's mind: "These familiar histories may perhaps be made of greater use, than the solemnities of professed Morality; and convey the knowledge of Vice and Virtue with more efficacy, than axioms and definitions."

Possibly few of his readers have had ampler opportunities than the author of this work, of watching society in all its different phases, gravely, and patiently; and the result, to his own mind, is a profound conviction, that human life and character, and all the incidents affecting them, can be contemplated safely, with instruction, and with true and enduring interest, only by the illumination of Christianity. Without it, everything looks, so to speak, upside down.

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Some one once said of this work, that it might be called—*The Romance of Death:* truly an unhappy and signally inapplicable expression; for there is no Romance in Death, but a tremendous REALITY, to be dealt with by every one of us, as best he may. The steady purpose of this work was to exhibit deathbeds,—those of fool and philosopher, profligate and virtuous, high and low, and the courses of life which have preceded them,—as witnessed by those summoned to do so, whether as friend, physician, or divine.

He hopes he may be pardoned for stating that an excellent nobleman, since dead, was so much interested in one of these papers, "THE MARTYR PHILOSOPHER," that he wrote to the late Mr Blackwood, asking permission to reprint it separately, at his own expense, for extensive circulation among the upper classes of society; declaring that he himself should never forget the effect which it had produced upon his own mind and heart. Such incidents as this—the approbation of wise and good men—richly reward writers who aim, however humbly, to do good.

In committing this work finally to the public, the Author ventures to express a hope that another object with which it was written, has been attained—to awaken society to a sense of its incalculable obligations to Medical Men. The amount of misery and suffering which they alleviate, cheerfully and patiently, often altogether gratuitously, and too frequently with ill-requital—nay, cruel ingratitude—can be appreciated by him only who has moved among them, as one of themselves. This the Author did, for several years, till he quitted it to study for that other great profession, to which he has ever since devoted himself. Should his leisure allow him, he intends to offer to the medical profession, as a discharge of some portion of that debt which Lord Bacon says every man owes to his profession, a Memoir, which his engagements have hitherto prevented his completing, of that illustrious surgeon, Sir Astley Cooper.

INNER TEMPLE, *November* 1853.

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# PREFACE TO FIFTH EDITION.

THE first chapter of these PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in August 1830, and the last in August 1837. The first separate publication of them, in two volumes, took place in 1832, between which period and the present, four very large impressions of them have been exhausted; and it is a great satisfaction both to my publisher and myself, to find that this has been effected without having, in any way, had recourse to the modern system of *puffing*—that miserable source of the degradation of literature. A fifth edition having been called for, is accompanied by the Third Volume, which contains all the chapters that have since made their appearance in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

As it lately became necessary, in the course of Chancery proceedings instituted by Mr Blackwood against parties who had pirated considerable portions of this work, that I should make oath of the fact of my being the sole author of it; and as it has been, both at home and abroad, long confidently attributed to other people —I now repeat the statement, that I am the sole author of every portion of the work, and, in deference to the wishes of my family, place my name, as such author, upon the title-page.* It is not necessary to trouble the reader with the reasons that induced me so long to abstain from doing so.

To account for any appearance of familiarity with medical details in this work, I may add, that I was for six years actively engaged in the practical study of physic —a profession, however, which I quitted in the month of September 1827.

It may, perhaps, be not uninteresting to the reader—merely, however, as a matter of petty literary detail—to be informed, that the first chapter of this *Diary*—the "Early Struggles"—was offered by me successively to the conductors of three leading magazines in London, and rejected, as "unsuitable for their pages," and "not likely to interest the public." In despair, I bethought myself of the Great Northern Magazine. I remember taking my packet to Mr Cadell's in the Strand, with a sad suspicion that I should never see or hear anything more of it: but at the close of the month I received a letter from Mr Blackwood, informing me that he had inserted the chapter, and begging me to make arrangements for immediately proceeding regularly with the series. It expressed his cordial approval of the first chapter, and predicted that I was likely to produce a series of papers well suited for his Magazine, and calculated to interest the public. It would be great affectation in me, and ingratitude towards the public, were I to conceal my belief that his expectations have been in some degree verified by the event. Here I wish to pay a brief and sincere tribute to the memory of my late friend, Mr Blackwood. I shall ever cherish it with respect and affection. I have this morning been referring to nearly fifty letters which he wrote to me during the publication of the first Fifteen Chapters of the *Diary*. The perusal of them has occasioned me lively emotion. All of them evidence the remarkable tact and energy with which he conducted his celebrated Magazine. Harassing as were his labours at the close of every month, he nevertheless invariably wrote to me a letter of considerable length, in style terse, vigorous, and accurate—full of interesting comments on literary matters in general, and instructive suggestions concerning my own papers in particular. He was a man of strong intellect, of great practical sagacity, of unrivalled energy and industry, of high and inflexible honour in every transaction, great or small, that I ever heard of his being concerned in. But for him, this Work would certainly never have been in existence; and should it be so fortunate as to *live*, I wish it ever to be accompanied by the tribute I here sincerely and spontaneously pay to the memory of my departed friend, William Blackwood.

* In three foreign editions of the *Diary*, the name of "DR HARRISON" is placed upon the title-page: in England, several persons have actually stated themselves to be the writers of this work; others, that they have contributed towards it. I need hardly say that all such statements are entirely untrue.

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I hope I may be permitted to add a word or two concerning the general nature of this Work, and my design in writing it. I never desired to count myself among the myriad *novelists* of the present age. Even were I able, I have no ambition to attempt such a thing; all I wished was to present some of the results of my own personal observation of life and character in their most striking exemplification—to illustrate, as it were, the real practical working of virtues and vices. With this view I have ever, of set purpose, selected the most ordinary incidents, the simplest combinations of circumstances; never attempting to disturb or complicate the development of character and of feeling with intricacy of plot, or novelty of incident. To this plan I have steadily adhered throughout the Work, and I hope it has gained the approbation of sober and judicious readers. I trust I shall be pardoned, and not treated as vain or egotistical, if I venture to extract the following passages from the "Preface by the Translator," prefixed to the German edition of this Work, as they have greatly gratified *me*, and also given that particular *character* to my labours which I have always been so anxious to vindicate for them:—

"This Work is such an unusual literary production, that even on that account a translation of it into German can by no means appear an unworthy undertaking. A further and better acquaintance with the original has strengthened the translator in his purpose, and has also convinced him of the merits of these 'Passages.' Indeed, he is now of opinion that this Work, though at first sight, perhaps, appearing to belong to the class of amusing literature, far distinguishes itself, by its intrinsic worth, from the usual run of fashionable literary productions. It contains a series of psychological sketches of human nature in various conditions, and especially in the last moments of life. . . . . They bear on them the undoubted stamp of *genuineness*; and the reflecting reader must be convinced, by the many characteristic touches with which most of them abound, that these narratives are at least *founded* upon truth; he will further feel persuaded that facts—*facts* witnessed by the author, are related—though, undoubtedly, here and there the reality has been coloured and veiled by a fiction-like dress. . . . . Although those narratives are, for the most part, of a peculiarly melancholy cast, and although, perhaps, we might have wished that the author had more spared the feelings of his readers, and that many close dissections of human misery had been omitted; yet it must be owned that even the most gloomy and heart-rending parts of these sketches are rich in thrilling situations and psychological perceptions—that a bright fountain of advice and warning springs from them all. The tendency of his work is throughout pure and moral; which must secure for him the most grateful acknowledgments from such even of his readers (amongst whom the translator is bound to place himself) as cannot perfectly agree in the strict religious opinions of the author. . . . . The translation has been made with the greatest accuracy; and, with the exception of a few polemical observations, nothing is altered."

I certainly feel much gratified by the approbation of my labours here expressed: but am quite at a loss to divine what can be the "*religious opinions*" from which such a translator would dissent, or the "*polemical observations*" he has found it necessary to suppress. Being a firm believer in Christianity—a conscientious member of the Church of England—I hope and believe that nothing will be found in this book inconsistent with such an avowal.

I do not intend to vindicate my selection of characters, scenes, and incidents. Some of them have been pretty freely remarked upon by the Press; all I can say, however, being, that my aim has been in every case for the best. One or two exceedingly severe, perhaps I might add, wanton and malignant attacks, have been made upon some of them; but I heartily forgive those who have done so, whoever they may be. In conclusion, I know, alas! that this work has many imperfections; but it has been too long in too many forms before the world for me to attempt, even were I so disposed, extensive alterations. Such as it is, I now finally commit it, in this its complete and authentic form, to the judgment of the public, very thankful for their approbation, and deferential to their censure. The duties of a laborious profession *may* not admit of my making any further contributions to literature, or I might, perhaps, attempt to prove myself worthier of the favour I have experienced, and cheerfully exclaim,

"To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new!"

SAMUEL WARREN.

INNER TEMPLE, LONDON.
*Oct.* 31, 1837.

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# DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY STRUGGLES.

* * * Can anything be conceived more dreary and disheartening, than the prospect before a young London physician, who, without friends or fortune, yet with high aspirations after professional eminence, is striving to weave around him what is technically called "a connection?" Such was my case. After having exhausted the slender finances allotted me from the funds of a poor but somewhat ambitious family, in passing through the usual routine of a college and medical education, I found myself, about my twenty-sixth year, in London—possessed of about £100 in cash, a few books, a tolerable wardrobe, an inexhaustible fund of animal spirits, and a wife—a lovely young creature, whom I had been absurd enough, some weeks before, to marry, merely because we loved each other. She was the only daughter of a very worthy fellow-townsman of mine, a widower; whose fortunes, alas! had decayed long before their possessor. Emily was the glory of his age, and, need I add, the pride of my youth; and after having assiduously attended her father through his last illness, the sole and rich return was his daughter's heart.

I must own, that, when we found ourselves fairly housed in the mighty metropolis, with so poor an exchequer, and the means of replenishing it so remote and contingent, we were somewhat startled at the boldness of the step we had taken. "Nothing venture, nothing have," however, was my maxim; and I felt supported by that unaccountable conviction which clings to all in such circumstances as mine, up to the very pinching moment, but no longer, that there *must* be thousands of ways of getting a livelihood, to which one can turn at a moment's warning. And then the swelling thought of being the architect of one's own fortune! As, however, daily drafts began to diminish my £100, my spirits faltered a little. I discovered that I might indeed, as well

> He pack'd in mine own grave,

as continue in London without money, or the means of getting it; and after revolving endless schemes, the only conceivable mode of doing so seemed calling in the *generous* assistance of the Jews. My father had fortunately effected a policy on my life for £5000, at an early period, on which some fourteen premiums had been paid; and this available security, added to the powerful influence of a young nobleman to whom I had rendered some service at college, enabled me to succeed in wringing a loan, from old Amos L——, of £3000, at the trifling interest of fifteen per cent, payable by way of redeemable annuity. It was with fear and trembling that I called myself master of this large sum, and with

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the utmost diffidence that I could bring myself to exercise what the lawyers would call *acts of ownership* on it. As, however, there was no time to lose, I took a respectable house in C—— Street, West*—furnished it neatly and respectably—fortunately enough, let the first floor to a rich old East India bachelor—beheld "Dr ———" glisten conspicuously on my door†—and then dropped my little line into the great water of London, resolved to abide the issue with patience.

Blessed with buoyant and sanguine spirits, I did not lay it much to heart that my only occupation during the first six months was—abroad, to practise the pardonable solecism of hurrying *haud passibus æquis* through the streets, as if in attendance on numerous patients; and at home, to ponder pleasantly over my books, and enjoy the company of my cheerful and affectionate wife. But when I had numbered twelve months, almost without feeling a pulse or receiving a fee, and was reminded by old L—— that the second half-yearly instalment of £225 was due, I began to look forward with some apprehension to the overcast future. Of the £3000, for the use of which I was paying so cruel and exorbitant a premium, little more than half remained—and this, notwithstanding we had practised the most rigid economy in our household expenditure, and devoted as little to dress as was compatible with maintaining a respectable exterior. To my sorrow, I found myself unavoidably contracting debts, which, with the interest due to old L——, I found it would be impossible to discharge. If matters went on as they seemed to threaten, what was to become of me in a year or two? Putting everything else out of the question, where was I to find funds to meet old L——'s annual demand of £450? Relying on my prospects of professional success, I had bound myself to return the £3000 within five years of the time of borrowing it; and now I thought I must have been mad to do so. If my profession failed me, I had nothing else to look to. I had no family resources—for my father had died since I came to London, very much embarrassed in his circumstances; and my mother, who was aged and infirm, had gone to reside with some relatives, who were few and poor. My wife, as I have stated, was in like plight. I do not think she had a relative in England (for her father and all his family were Germans), except

> —— him, whose brightest joy
> Was, that he called her—wife.

Lord ——, the nobleman before mentioned, who, I am sure, would have rejoiced in assisting me, either by pecuniary advances or professional introductions, had been on the Continent ever since I commenced practice. Being of studious habits, and a very bashful and reserved disposition while at Cambridge, I could number but few college friends, none of whom I knew where to find in London Neither my wife nor I knew more than five people, besides our Indian lodger; for, to tell the truth, we were, like many a fond and foolish couple before us, all the world to one another, and cared little for scraping together promiscuous acquaintance. If we had even been inclined to visiting, our straitened circumstances would have forbid our incurring the expenses attached to it. What, then, was to be done? My wife would say, "Poh, love, we shall contrive to get on as well as our neighbours;" but the simple fact was, we were not getting on like our neighbours, nor did I see any prospect of our ever doing so. I began, therefore, to pass sleepless nights, and days of despondency, casting about in every direction for any employment consistent with my profession, and redoubling my fruitless efforts to obtain practice.

It is almost laughable to say, that our only receipts were a few paltry guineas, sent, at long intervals, from old Mr Asperne, the proprietor of the European Magazine, as remuneration

* "On sait que la partie *Est* de Londres est réservée aux gens de commerce; et que l'Ouest de la même ville est habité par l'aristocratie."—*Note of the French Translator.*

† "Ces plaques de cuivre, portant le nom du propriétaire, ou du principal locataire, se trouvent sur toutes les portes."—*Ib.*

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for a sort of monthly medical summary with which I furnished him, and a trifle or two from Mr Nicholls, of the Gentleman's Magazine, as an acknowledgment for several sweet sonnets sent by my wife.

Knowing the success which often attended professional authorship, as tending to acquire for the writer a reputation for skill on the subject of which he treated, and introduce him to the notice of the higher members of his own profession, I determined to turn my attention that way. For several months I was up early and late at a work on Diseases of the Lungs. I bestowed incredible pains on it; and my toil was sweetened by my wife, who would sit by me, in the long summer evenings, like an angel, consoling and encouraging me with predictions of success. She lightened my labour by undertaking the transcription of the manuscript; and I thought that two or three hundred sheets of fair and regular handwriting were heavily purchased by the impaired eyesight of the beloved amanuensis. When at length it was completed, having been read and revised twenty times, so that there was not a comma wanting, I hurried, full of fluttering hopes and fears, to a well-known medical bookseller, expecting he would at once purchase the copyright. Fifty pounds I had fixed in my own mind as the minimum of what I would accept; and I had already appropriated some little part of it towards buying a handsome silk dress for my wife. Alas! even in this branch of my profession, my hopes were doomed to meet with disappointment. The bookseller received me with great civility; listened to every word I had to say; seemed to take some interest in my new views of the disease treated of, which I explained to him, and repeated —and ventured to assure him, that they would certainly attract public attention. My heart leaped for joy as I saw his business-like eye settled upon me with an expression of attentive interest. After having almost talked myself hoarse, and flushed myself all over with excitement, he removed his spectacles, and politely assured me of his approbation of the work; but that he had determined never to publish any more medical books on his own account. I have the most vivid recollection of almost turning sick with chagrin. With a faltering voice I asked him if that was his unalterable determination? He replied, it was; for he had "lost too much by speculations of that sort." I tied up the manuscript, and withdrew. As soon as I left his shop, I let fall a scorching tear of mingled sorrow and mortification. I could almost have wept aloud. At that moment, whom should I meet but my dear wife! for we had both been talking all night long, and all breakfast-time, about the probable result of my interview with the bookseller; and her anxious affection would not permit her to wait my return. She had been pacing to and fro on the other side of the street, and flew to me on my leaving the shop. I could not speak to her; I felt almost choked. At last her continued expressions of tenderness and sympathy soothed me into a more equable frame of mind, and we returned to dinner. In the afternoon, I offered it to another bookseller, who, John Trot like, told me at once he "never did that sort of thing." I offered it subsequently to every medical bookseller I could find —with like success. One fat fellow snuffled out, "If he might make so bold," he would advise me to leave off book-making, and stick to my practice; another assured me he had got two similar works then in the press; and the last I consulted told me I was too young, he thought, to have seen enough of practice for writing "a book of that nature," as his words were. "Publish it on your own account, love," said my wife. That, however, was out of the question, whatever might be the merits of the work—for I had no funds; and a kind-hearted bookseller, to whom I mentioned the project, assured me that, if I went to press, my work would fall from it still-born. When I returned home from making this last attempt, I flung myself into a chair by the fireside, opposite my wife, without speaking. There was an anxious smile of sweet solicitude in her face. My agi-

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tated and mortified air convinced her that I was finally disappointed, and that six months' hard labour were thrown away. In a fit of uncontrollable pique and passion, I flung the manuscript on the fire; but Emily suddenly snatched it from the flames, gazed on me with a look such as none but a fond and devoted wife could give—threw her arms round my neck, and kissed me back to calmness, if not happiness. I laid the manuscript in question on a shelf in my study; and it was my first and last attempt at medical book-making.

From what cause, or combination of causes, I know not, but I seemed marked out for failure in my profession. Though my name shone on my door, and the respectable neighbourhood could not but have noticed the regularity and decorum of my habits and manners, yet none ever thought of calling me in! Had I been able to exhibit a line of carriages at my door, or open my house for the reception of company, or dash about town in an elegant equipage, or be seen at the opera and theatres—had I been able to do this, the case might have been different. In candour I must acknowledge, that another probable cause of my ill success was a somewhat insignificant person, and unprepossessing countenance. I could not wear such an eternal smirk of conceited complacency, or keep my head perpetually bowing, mandarin-like, as many of my professional brothers. Still there were thousands to whom these deficiencies proved no serious obstacles. The great misfortune in my case was, undoubtedly, the want of introductions. There was a man of considerable rank and great wealth, who was a sort of fiftieth cousin of mine, resided in one of the fashionable squares not far from me, and on whom I had called to claim kindred, and solicit his patronage; but after having sent up my name and address, I was suffered to wait so long in an anteroom, that, what with this and the noise of servants bustling past with insolent familiarity, I quite forgot the relationship, and left the house, wondering what had brought me there. I never felt inclined to go near it again; so there was an end of all prospects of introduction from that quarter. I was left, therefore, to rely exclusively on my own efforts, and trust to chance for patients. It is true that, in the time I have mentioned, I was twice called in at an instant's warning; but, in both cases, the objects of my visits had expired before my arrival, probably before a messenger could be despatched for me: and the manner in which my fees were proffered, convinced me that I should be cursed for a mercenary wretch if I accepted them. I was therefore induced, in each case, to decline the guinea, though it would have purchased me a week's happiness! I was also, on several occasions, called in to visit the inferior members of families in the neighbourhood—servants, housekeepers, porters, &c.; and of all the trying, the mortifying occurrences in the life of a young physician, such occasions as these are the most irritating. You go to the house—a large one probably—and are instructed not to knock at the front door, but to go down by the area to your patient!

I think it was about this time that I was summoned in haste to young Sir Charles F——, who resided near Mayfair. Delighted at the prospect of securing so distinguished a patient, I hurried to his house, resolved to do my utmost to give satisfaction. When I entered the room, I found the sprig of fashion enveloped in a crimson silk dressing-gown, sitting conceitedly on the sofa, and sipping a cup of coffee, from which he desisted a moment to examine me—positively—through his eye-glass, and then directed me to inspect the swelled foot of a favourite pointer! Darting a look of anger at the insulting coxcomb, I instantly withdrew without uttering a word. *Five years* afterwards did that young man make use of the most strenuous efforts to oust me from the confidence of a family of distinction, to which he was distantly related.*

* This anecdote calls to my mind one told me by the late Dr James Hamilton. He was sent for once in great haste by Lady P——, to see—absolutely a little favourite *monkey*,

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A more gratifying incident occurred shortly afterwards. I had the misfortune to be called, on a sudden emergency, into consultation with the late celebrated Dr ——. It was the first consultational visit that I had ever paid; and I was, of course, very anxious to acquit myself creditably. Shall I ever forget the air of insolent condescension with which he received me; or the remark he made in the presence of several individuals, professional as well as unprofessional?—"I assure you, Dr ——, there is *really* some difference between apoplexy and epilepsy, at least there was when I was a young man!" He accompanied these words with a look of supercilious commiseration, directed to the lady whose husband was our patient; and I need not add, that my future services were dispensed with! My heart ached to think that such a fellow as this should have it in his power to take, as it were, the bread out of the mouth of an unpretending and almost spirit-broken professional brother; but I had no remedy. I am happy to have it in my power to say how much the tone of consulting physicians is now (1820) lowered towards their brethren who may happen to be of a few years' less standing, and, consequently, less firmly fixed in the confidence of their patients. It was by a few similar incidents to those above related, that my spirit began to be soured; and had it not been for the unvarying sweetness and cheerfulness of my incomparable wife, existence would not have been tolerable. My professional efforts were paralysed; failure attended every attempt; my ruin seemed sealed. My resources were rapidly melting away—my expenditure, moderate as it was, was counterbalanced by no incomings. A prison and starvation scowled before me.

Despairing of finding any better source of emolument, I was induced to send an advertisement to one of the daily papers, stating, that "a graduate of Cambridge University, having a little spare time at his disposal, was willing to give private instructions in the classics, in the evenings, to gentlemen preparing for college, or to others!" After about a week's interval, I received one solitary communication. It was from a young man holding some subordinate situation under government, and residing at Pimlico. This person offered me two guineas a-month, if I would attend him, *at his own house*, for two hours, on the evenings of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday! With these hard terms was I obliged to comply—yes, a gentleman, and a member of an English university, was driven so low as to attend, for these terms, an ignorant underling, and endeavour to instil a few drops of classic lore into the turbid and shallow waters of his understanding. I had hardly given him a month's attendance before he assured me, with a flippant air, that, as he had now acquired "a practical knowledge of the classics," he would dispense with my further services! Dull dunce! he could not, in Latin, be brought to comprehend the difference between a neuter and an active verb; while, as for Greek, it was an absolute chokepear; so he nibbled on to τιμή—and then gave it up. Bitter but unavailing were my regrets, as I returned from paying my last visit to this promising scholar, that I had not entered the army, and gone to America, or even betaken myself to some subordinate commercial situation. A thousand and a thousand times did I curse the ambition which brought me up to London, and the egregious vanity which led me to rely so implicitly on my talents for success. Had I but been content with the humbler sphere of a general practitioner, I might have laid out my dearly-bought £3000 with a reasonable prospect of soon repaying it, and acquiring a respectable livelihood. But all these sober thoughts,

which was almost suffocated with its morning feed. When the doctor entered the room, he saw only her ladyship, her young son (a lad of ten years old, who was most absurdly dressed), and his patient. Looking at each of the two latter, he said coolly to Lady P——, "My lady, *which* is the monkey?" [I am made to say in French, "'Madame,' dit-il, 'Messieurs vos fils n'ont qu'à faire diète et à boire du thé.' Il s'en alla aussitôt." And further, the name of *Abernethy* is coolly substituted for that of Dr Hamilton!]

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as is usual, came only time enough to enhance the mortification of failure.

* * * *

About £300 was now the miserable remnant of the money borrowed from the Jew; and half a year's interest (£225), together with my rent, was due in about a fortnight's time. I was, besides, indebted to many tradesmen —who were becoming every day more querulous—for articles of food, clothing, and furniture. My poor Emily was in daily expectation of her accouchement; and my own health was sensibly sinking, under the combined pressure of anxiety and excessive parsimony. What was to be done? Despair was clinging to me, and shedding blight and mildew over all my faculties. Every avenue was closed against me. I never knew what it was to have more than one or two hours' sleep at night, and that so heavy, so troubled, and interrupted, that I awoke each morning more dead than alive. I lay tossing in bed, revolving all conceivable schemes and fancies in my tortured brain, till at length, from mere iteration, they began to assume a feasible aspect; alas! however, they would none of them bear the blush of daylight, but faded away as extravagant and absurd. I would endeavour to set afloat a popular Medical Journal—to give lectures on diseases of the lungs —(a department with which I was familiar)—I would advertise for a small medical partnership, as a general practitioner—I would do a thousand things of the sort; but where was my capital to set out with? I had £300 in the world, and £450 yearly to pay to an extortionating old miser: that was the simple fact; and it almost drove me to despair to advert to it for one instant. Wretched, however, as I was, and almost every instant loathing my existence, the idea of suicide was never entertained for a moment. If the fiend would occasionally flit across the dreary chamber of my heart, a strong and unceasing confidence in the goodness and power of my Maker always repelled the fearful visitant. Even yet, rapidly as I seemed approaching the precipice of ruin, I could not avoid cherishing a feeble hope that some unexpected avenue would open to better fortune; and the thought of it would, for a time, soothe my troubled breast, and nerve it to bear up against the inroads of my present misfortunes.

I recollect sitting down one day in St James's Park, on one of the benches, weary with wandering the whole morning I knew not whither. I felt faint and ill, and more than usually depressed in mind. I had that morning paid one of my tradesmen's bills, amounting to £10; and the fellow told my servant that, as he had so much trouble in getting his money, he did not want the honour of my custom any longer. The thought that my credit was failing in the neighbourhood was insupportable. Ruin and disgrace would then be accelerated; and being unable to meet my creditors, I should be proclaimed little less than a swindler, and shaken like a viper from the lap of society. Fearful as were such thoughts, I had not enough of energy of feeling left to suffer much agitation from them. I folded my arms on my breast in sullen apathy, and wished only that, whatever might be my fate, certainty might be substituted for suspense.

While indulging in thoughts like these, a glittering troop of soldiers passed by me, preceded by their band, playing a merry air. How the sounds jarred on the broken strings of my heart! And many a bright face, dressed in smiles of gaiety and happiness, thronged past, attracted by the music, little thinking of the wretchedness of him who was sitting by! I could not prevent the tears of anguish from gushing forth. I thought of Emily—of her delicate and interesting, but, to me, melancholy situation. I could not bear the thought of returning home, to encounter her affectionate looks—her meek and gentle resignation to her bitter fortunes Why had I married her, without first having considered whether I could support her? Passionately fond of me, as I well knew she was, could she avoid frequently recurring to the days of our courtship, when I reiteratedly assured her of my certainty of professional success as soon as I could

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get settled in London? Where now were all the fair and flourishing scenes to which my childish enthusiasm had taught me to look forward? Would not the bitter contrast she was now experiencing, and seemed doomed long yet to experience, alienate from me a portion of her affections, and induce feelings of anger and contempt? Could I blame her for all this? If the goodly superstructure of my fortunes fell, was it not I that had loosened and destroyed the foundation?—Reflections like these were harassing and scourging me, when an elderly gentleman, evidently an invalid, tottered slowly to the bench where I was sitting, and sat down beside me. He seemed a man of wealth and consideration; for his servant, on whose arm he had been leaning, and who now stood behind the bench on which he was sitting, wore a very elegant livery. He was almost shaken to pieces by an asthmatic cough, and was, besides, suffering from another severe disorder, which need not be more particularly named. He looked at me once or twice, in a manner which seemed to say, that he would not take it rudely if I addressed him. I did so. "I am afraid, sir," I said, "you are in great pain from that cough?" "Yes," he gasped faintly; "and I don't know how to get rid of it. I am an old man, you see, sir; and methinks my summons to the grave might have been less loud and painful." After a little pause, I ventured to ask him how long he had been subject to the cough which now harassed him? He said, more or less, for the last ten years; but that, latterly, it had increased so much upon him that he could not derive any benefit from medical advice. "I should think, sir, the more violent symptoms of your disorder might be mitigated," said I, and proceeded to question him minutely, but hesitatingly, as to the origin and progress of the complaints which now afflicted him. He answered all my questions with civility; and, as I went on, seemed to be roused into something like curiosity and interest. I need not say more, than that I discovered he had not been in the hands of a skilful practitioner; and that I assured him very few and simple means would give him great relief from at least the more violent symptoms. He, of course, perceived I was in the medical profession; and, after some apparent hesitation, evidently as to whether or not I should feel hurt, tendered me a guinea. I refused it promptly and decidedly, and assured him that he was quite welcome to the very trifling advice I had rendered him. At that moment, a young man of fashionable appearance walked up, and told him their carriage was waiting at the corner of the stable-yard. This last gentleman, who seemed to be either the son or nephew of the old gentleman, eyed me, I thought, with a certain superciliousness, which was not lessened when the invalid told him I had given him some excellent advice, for which he could not prevail on me to receive a fee. "We are vastly obliged to you, sir; but are going home to the family physician," said the young man, haughtily; and, placing the invalid's arm in his, led him slowly away. He was addressed several times by the servant as "*Sir*" something, *Wilton* or *William*, I think; but I could not distinctly catch it, so that it was evidently a person of some rank I had been addressing. How many there are, thought I, that, with a more plausible and insinuating address than mine is, would have contrived to get into the confidence of this gentleman, and become his medical attendant! How foolish was I not to give him my card when he proffered me a fee, and thus, in all probability, be sent for the next morning to pay a regular professional visit! and to what lucrative introductions might not that have led! A thousand times I cursed my diffidence—my sensitiveness as to professional etiquette—and my inability to seize the advantages occasionally offered by a fortunate conjuncture of circumstances. I was fitter, I thought, for La Trappe than the bustling world of business. I deserved my ill fortune; and professional failure was the natural consequence of the *mauvaise honte* which has injured so many. As the day, however, was far advancing, I left

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the seat, and turned my steps towards my cheerless home.

As was generally the case, I found Emily busily engaged in painting little fire-screens, and other ornamental toys, which, when completed, I was in the habit of carrying to a kind of private bazaar in Oxford Street, where I was not known, and where, with an aching heart, I disposed of the delicate and beautiful productions of my poor wife, for a trifle hardly worth taking home. Could any man, pretending to the slightest feeling, contemplate his young wife, far advanced in pregnancy, in a critical state of health, and requiring air, exercise, and cheerful company, toiling, in the manner I have related, from morning to night, and for a miserably inadequate remuneration? She submitted, however, to our misfortunes, with infinitely more firmness and equanimity than I could pretend to; and her uniform cheerfulness of demeanour, together with the passionate fervour of her fondness for me, contributed to fling a few rays of trembling and evanescent lustre over the gloomy prospects of the future. Still, however, the dreadful question incessantly presented itself—What, in Heaven's name, is to become of us? I cannot say that we were at this time in absolute literal want; though our parsimonious fare hardly deserved the name of food, especially such as my wife's delicate situation required. It was the hopelessness of all *prospective* resources that kept us in perpetual thraldom. With infinite effort we might contrive to hold on to a given period—say, till the next half-yearly demand of old L——; and then we must sink altogether, unless a miracle intervened to save us. Had I been alone in the world, I might have braved the worst, have turned my hand to a thousand things, have accommodated myself to almost any circumstances, and borne the extremest privations with fortitude. But my darling—my meek, smiling, gentle Emily!—my heart bled for her.

Not to leave any stone unturned, seeing an advertisement addressed, "To medical men," I applied for the situation of assistant to a general practitioner, though I had but little skill in the practical part of compounding medicines. I applied personally to the advertiser, a fat, red-faced, vulgar fellow, who had contrived to gain a very large practice, by what means God only knows. His terms were—and these named in the most offensive contemptuousness of manner — £80 a-year, board and lodge out, and give *all* my time in the day to my employer! Absurd as was the idea of acceding to terms like these, I thought I might still consider them. I pressed hard for £100 a-year, and told him I was married ——

"Married!" said he, with a loud laugh; "No, no, sir, you are not the man for my money; so I wish you good morning." *

Thus was I baffled in every attempt to obtain a permanent source of support from my profession. It brought me about £40 per annum. I gained, by occasional contributions to magazines, an average sum annually of about £25. My wife earned about that sum by her pencil. And these were all the funds I had to meet the enormous interest due half-yearly to old L——, to discharge my rent, and the various other expenses of housekeeping, &c. Might I not well despair? I did; and God's goodness only preserved me from the frightful calamity which has suddenly terminated the earthly miseries of thousands in similar circumstances.

And is it possible, I often thought, with all the tormenting credulousness of a man half stupified with his misfortunes—is it possible, that, in the very heart of this metropolis of splendour, wealth, and extravagance, a gentleman and a scholar, who has laboured long in the honourable toil of acquiring professional knowledge, cannot contrive to scrape together even a competent subsistence? and that, too, while ignorance and infamy are wallowing in wealth—while charlatanry and quackery of all kinds are bloated with suc-

* This worthy (a Mr C—— by name) lived at this time in the region of St George's in the East.

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cess! Full of such thoughts as these, how often have I slunk stealthily along the streets of London, on cold and dreary winter evenings, almost fainting with long abstinence, yet reluctant to return home and incur the expense of an ordinary family dinner, while my wife's situation required the most rigorous economy to enable us to meet, even in a poor and small way, the exigencies of her approaching accouchement! How often—ay, hundreds of times—have I envied the coarse and filthy fare of the minor eating-houses, and been content to interrupt a twelve hours' fast with a bun or biscuit and a draught of water or turbid table-beer, under the wretched pretence of being in too great a hurry to go home to dinner! I have often gazed with envy—once, I recollect, in particular—on dogs eating their huge daily slice of boiled horse's flesh, and envied their contented and satiated looks! With what anguish of heart have I seen carriages setting down company at the door of a house, illuminated by the glare of a hundred tapers, where were ladies dressed in the extreme of fashion, whose cast-off clothes would have enabled me to acquire a tolerably respectable livelihood! O, ye sons and daughters of luxury and extravagance! how many thousands of needy and deserving families would rejoice to eat of the crumbs which fall from your tables, and they may not!

I have stood many a time at my parlour window, and envied the kitchen fare of the servants of my wealthy opposite neighbour; while I protest I have been ashamed to look our own servant in the face, as she, day after day, served up for two what was little more than sufficient for one: and yet, bitter mockery! I was to support abroad the farce of a cheerful and respectable professional exterior.

* * * *

Two days after the occurrence at St James's Park, above related, I was, as usual, reading the columns of advertisements in one of the daily papers, when my eyes lit on the following:—

"The professional gentleman, who, a day or two ago, had some conversation on the subject of asthma, with an *invalid*, on one of the benches of St James's Park, is particularly requested to forward his name and address to W. J., care of Messrs ——."

I almost let the paper fall from my hands with delighted surprise. That I was the "professional gentleman" alluded to, was clear; and on the slender foundation of this advertisement, I had, in a few moments, built a large and splendid superstructure of good fortune. I had hardly calmness enough to call my wife, who was engaged with some small household matters, for the purpose of communicating the good news to her. I need hardly say with what eagerness I complied with the requisitions of the advertisement. Half an hour beheld my name and address in an envelope, with the superscription, "W. J.," lying at Messrs ——'s, who were stationers. After passing a most anxious and sleepless night, agitated by all kinds of hopes and fears, my wife and I were sitting at breakfast, when a livery servant knocked at the door; and, after inquiring whether "Dr ——" was at home, left a letter. It was an envelope, containing the card of address of Sir William ——, No. 26, —— Street, accompanied with the following note:—

"Sir William ——'s compliments to Dr ——, and will feel obliged by his looking in in the course of the morning."

"Now be calm, my dear ——," said Emily, as she saw my fluttering excitement of manner. But, alas! that was impossible. I was impatient for the hour of twelve; and precisely as the clock struck, I sallied forth to visit my titled patient. All the way I went, I was taxing my ingenuity for palliatives, remedies for asthma: I would new-regulate his diet and plan of life—in short, I would do wonders!

Sir William, who was sitting gasping by the fireside, received me with great courtesy; and after motioning his niece, a charming young woman, to retire, told me, he had been so much interested by my remarks the other day in the Park, that he felt inclined to follow my advice, and put himself

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under my care altogether. He then entered on a history of his complaints. I found his constitution was entirely broken up, and that in a very little while it must fall to pieces. I told him, however, that if he would adhere strictly to the regimen I proposed, I could promise him great if not permanent relief. He listened to what I said with the utmost interest. "Do you think you could prolong my life, Doctor, for two years?" said he, with emotion. I told him, I certainly could not pretend to promise him so much. "My only reason for asking the question," he replied, "is my beloved niece, that young lady, who has just left us. If I cannot live for two years or eighteen months longer, it will be a bitter thing for her!"—He sighed deeply, and added abruptly—"But of that more hereafter. I hope to see you to-morrow, Doctor." He insisted on my accepting five guineas, in return for the *two* visits he said he had received; and I took my departure. I felt altogether a new man, as I walked home. My spirits were more light and buoyant than they had been for many a long month; for I could not help thinking, that I had now a fair chance of introduction into respectable practice. My wife shared my joy; and we were as happy for the rest of that day, as if we had already surmounted the heavy difficulties which oppressed us.

I attended Sir William every day that week, and received a fee of two guineas for each visit. On Sunday I met the family physician, Sir ——, who had just been released from attendance on one of the Royal Family. He was a polite but haughty man; and seemed inclined to be much displeased with Sir William for calling me in. When I entered, Sir William introduced me to him as "Dr ——." "Dr ——, of —— Square?" inquired the other physician, carelessly. I told him where I lived. He affected to be reflecting where the street was; it was the one next to that in which he himself resided. There is nothing in the world so easy, as for the eminent members of our profession to take the bread out of the mouths of their younger brethren with the best grace in the world. So Sir —— contrived in the present case. He assured Sir William, that nothing was calculated to do him so much good as change of air. Of course, I could not but assent. The sooner, he said, Sir William left town the better. Sir William asked me if I concurred in that opinion?—Certainly. He set off for Worthing two days after; and I lost the best, and almost the only patient I had then ever had; for Sir William died after three weeks' residence at Worthing.

This circumstance occasioned me great depression of spirits. Nothing that I touched seemed to prosper; and the transient glimpses I occasionally obtained of good fortune, seemed given only to tantalise me, and enhance the bitterness of the contrast. My store of money was reduced at last from £3000 to £25 in cash; my debts amounted to upwards of £100; and in six months, another £225 would be due to old L——! My wife, too, had been confined, and there was another source of expense; for both she and my little daughter were in a very feeble state of health. Still, sweetly wishful to accommodate herself to one lowered in circumstances, she almost broke my heart one day with the proposal of dismissing our servant, the whole of whose labour my poor sweet Emily herself undertook to perform! No, no—this was too much; the tears of agony gushed from my eyes, as I folded her delicate frame in my arms, and assured her that Providence would never permit so much virtue and gentleness to be degraded into such humiliating servitude. I *said* this; but my heart heavily misgave me, that a more wretched prospect was before her!

I have often sat by my small, solitary parlour fire, and pondered over our misery and misfortunes, till almost frenzied with the violence of my emotions. Where was I to look for relief? What earthly remedy was there? O my God! thou alone knowest what this poor heart of mine suffered in such times as these, not on my own account, but for those beloved beings whose ruin was implicated in mine! What, how-

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ever, was to be done at the present crisis, seeing, at Christmas, old L—— would come upon me for his interest, and my other creditors would insist on payment? A dreary mist came over my mind's eye whenever I attempted to look steadily forward into futurity. I had written several times to my kind and condescending friend, Lord ——, who still continued abroad; but as I knew not to what part of the Continent to direct, and the servants of his family pretended they knew not, I left my letters at his town house, to be forwarded with his quarterly packages. I suppose my letters must have been opened, and burned, as little other than pestering, begging letters; for I never heard from him.

I have often heard from my father, that we had a sort of fiftieth cousin in London, a baronet of great wealth, who had married a distant relation of our family, on account solely of her beauty; but that he was one of the most haughty and arrogant men breathing—had, in the most insolent manner, disavowed the relationship, and treated my father, on one occasion, very contumeliously; a fate I had myself shared, as the reader may recollect, not long ago.* Since then, however, the pressure of accumulated misfortunes had a thousand times forced upon me the idea of once more applying to this man, and stating my circumstances. As one is easily induced to believe what one *wishes* to be true, I could not help thinking that surely he must in some degree relent, if informed of our utter misery; but my heart always failed me when I took my pen in hand to write to him. I was at a loss for terms in which to state our distress most feelingly, and in a manner best calculated to arrest his attention. I had, however, after infinite reluctance, addressed a letter of this sort to his lady; who, I am sorry to say, shared all Sir ——'s *hauteur;* and received an answer from a fashionable watering-place, where her ladyship was spending the summer months. This is it:—

"Lady ——'s compliments to Dr ——, and having received his letter, and given it her best consideration, is happy in being able to request Dr ——'s acceptance of the enclosed; which, however, owing to Sir ——'s temporary embarrassment in pecuniary matters, she has had some difficulty in sending. She is, therefore, under the painful necessity of requesting Dr —— to abstain from future applications of this sort. As to Dr ——'s offer of his medical services to Lady ——'s family, when in town, Lady —— must beg to decline them, as the present physician has attended the family for years, and neither Lady —— nor Sir —— see any reason for changing.

"W——, to Dr ——."

The enclosure was £10, which I was on the point of returning in a blank envelope, indignant at the cold and unfeeling letter which accompanied it; but the pale sunk cheeks of my wife appealed against my pride, and I retained it. To return. Recollecting the reception of this application, as well as my former visit to Sir ——, my heart froze at the very idea of repeating it. To what, however, will not misfortune compel a man! I determined, at length, to call upon Sir ——; to insist upon being shown to him. I set out for this purpose, without telling my errand to my wife, who, as I have before stated, was confined to her bed, and in a very feeble state of health. It was a fine sunny morning, or rather noon; all that I passed seemed happy and contented; their spirits exhilarated by the genial weather, and sustained by the successful prosecution of business. *My* heart, however, was fluttering feebly beneath the pressure of anticipated disappointment. I was going in the spirit of a forlorn hope; with a dogged determination to make the *attempt;* to *know* that even this door was shut against me. My knees trembled beneath me as I entered —— Place, and saw elegant equipages standing at the doors of most of the gloomy, but magnificent houses, which seemed to frown off such insignificant and wretched individuals as myself. How could I ever muster resolution enough, I thought,

* Page 4.

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to ascend the steps, and knock and ring in a sufficiently authoritative manner to be attended to? It is laughable to relate, but I could not refrain from stepping back into a by-street, and getting a small glass of some cordial spirit to give me a little firmness. At length I ventured again into —— Place, and found Sir ——'s house on the opposite side. There was no one to be seen but some footmen in undress, lolling indolently at the dining-room window, and making their remarks on passers-by. I dreaded these fellows as much as their master! It was no use, however, indulging in thoughts of that kind; so I crossed over, and lifting the huge knocker, made a tolerably decided application of it, and pulled the bell with what I fancied was a sudden and imperative jerk. The summons was instantly answered by the corpulent porter, who, seeing nothing but a plain pedestrian, kept hold of the door, and leaning against the door-post, asked me familiarly what were my commands.

"Is Sir —— at home?"

"Ye—es," said the fellow, in a supercilious tone.

"Can he be spoken to?"

"I think he can't, for he wasn't home till six o'clock this morning from the Duchess of ——'s."

"Can I wait for him? and will you show him this card," said I, tendering it to him—"and say I have particular business?"

"Couldn't look in again at four, could you?" he inquired, in the same tone of cool assurance.

"No, sir," I replied, kindling with indignation; "my business is urgent—I shall wait now."

With a yawn he opened the door for me, and called to a servant to show me into the antechamber, saying, I must make up my mind to wait an hour or two, as Sir —— was then only just getting up, and would be an hour at least at his breakfast. He then left me, saying he would send my card up to his master. My spirits were somewhat ruffled and agitated with having forced my way thus far through the frozen island of English aristocracy, and I sat down determined to wait patiently till I was summoned up to Sir ——. I could hear several equipages dashing up to the door, and the visitors they brought were always shown up immediately. I rung the bell and asked a servant why I was suffered to wait so long, as Sir —— was clearly visible now?

"'Pon honour, I don't know indeed," said the fellow, coolly shutting the door.

Boiling with indignation, I resumed my seat, then walked to and fro, and presently sat down again. Soon afterwards, I heard the French valet ordering the carriage to be in readiness in half an hour. I rung again; the same servant answered. He walked into the room, and standing near me, asked, in a familiar tone, what I wanted. "Show me up to Sir ——, for I shall wait no longer," said I, sternly.

"Can't, sir, indeed," he replied, with a smirk on his face.

"Has my card been shown to Sir ——?" I inquired, struggling to preserve my temper.

"I'll ask the porter if he gave it to Sir ——'s valet," he replied, and shut the door.

About ten minutes afterwards a carriage drove up; there was a bustle on the stairs, and in the hall. I heard a voice saying, "If Lord —— calls, tell him I am gone to his house;" in a few moments, the steps of the carriage were let down—the carriage drove off—and all was quiet. Once more, I rung.

"Is Sir —— *now* at liberty?"

"Oh! he's gone out, sir," said the same servant, who had twice before answered my summons. The valet then entered. I asked him, with lips quivering with indignation, why I had not seen Sir ——? I was given to understand that my card had been shown the Baronet—that he said, "I've no time to attend to this person," or words to that effect—and had left his house without deigning to notice me! Without uttering more than "Show me the door, sir," to the servant, I took my departure, determining to perish rather than make a second application. To anticipate my narrative a little, I may

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state that, ten years afterwards, Sir ——, who had become dreadfully addicted to gambling, lost all his property, and died suddenly of an apoplectic seizure, brought on by a paroxysm of fury! Thus did Providence reward this selfish and unfeeling man.

I walked about the town for several hours, endeavouring to wear off that air of chagrin and sorrow which had been occasioned by my reception at Sir ——'s. Something *must* be done, and that immediately; for absolute starvation was now before us. I could think of but two other quarters where I could apply for a little temporary relief. I resolved to write a note to a very celebrated and successful brother practitioner, stating my necessities — acquainting him candidly with my whole circumstances, and soliciting the favour of a temporary accommodation of a few pounds—twenty was the sum I ventured to name. I wrote the letter at a coffeehouse, and returned home. I spent all that evening in attempting to picture to myself the reception it would meet with. I tried to put myself in the place of him I had written to, and fancy the feelings with which I should receive a similar application. I need not, however, tantalise the reader. After nearly a fortnight's suspense, I received the following reply to my letter. I shall give it *verbatim*, after premising, that the writer of it was at that time making about £10,000 or £12,000 a-year:—

"—— encloses a trifle *(one guinea)* to Dr ——; wishes it may be serviceable; but must say, that when young men attempt a station in life without competent funds to meet it, they cannot wonder if they fail.

"—— Square."

The other quarter was old Mr G——, our Indian lodger. Though an eccentric and reserved man, shunning all company, except that of a favourite black servant, I thought he might yet be liberal. As he was something of a character, I must be allowed a word or two about him, in passing. Though he occupied the whole of the first floor of my house, I seldom saw him. In truth, he was little else than a bronze fireside fixture—all day long, summer and winter, protected from the intrusion of draughts and visitors, which equally annoyed him, by a huge folding-screen—swathed, mummy-like, in flannel and furs—squalling incessant execrations against the chilly English climate—and solacing himself, alternately, with sleep, caudle, and curry. He would sit for hours listening to a strange cluttering (I know no word but this that can give anything like an idea of it), and most melancholy noise, uttered by his black grizzle-headed servant—which I was given to understand was a species of Indian song—evincing his satisfaction by a face curiously puckered together, and small beady black eyes, glittering with the light of vertical suns: thus, I say, he would sit till both dropt asleep. He was very fond of this servant (whose name was Clinquabor, or something of that sort), and yet would kick and strike him with great violence on the slightest occasions.

Without being sordidly self-interested, I candidly acknowledge, that on receiving him into our house, and submitting to divers inconveniences from his strange foreign fancies, I had calculated on his proving a lucrative lodger. I was, however, very much mistaken. He uniformly discouraged my visits, by evincing the utmost restlessness, and even trepidation, whenever I approached. He was more tolerant of my wife's visits; but even to her could not help intimating in pretty plain terms, on more occasions than one, that he had no idea of being "drugged to death by his landlord." On one occasion, however, his servant came stuttering with agitation into my room, that "hib massa wis to see—a—a Docta." I found him suffering from the heartburn; submitted to his asthmatic querulousness for nearly half an hour; prescribed the usual remedies; and received in return—a guinea?—No, a curious, ugly, and perfectly useless cane, with which (to enhance its value) he assured me he had once kept a large snake at bay! On another occasion, in return for similar professional assistance, he dismissed me

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without tendering me a fee, or anything instead of it; but sent for my wife in the course of the afternoon, and presented her with a hideous little cracked china teapot, the lid fastened with a dingy silver chain, and the lip of the spout bearing evident marks of an ancient compound fracture. He was singularly exact in everything he did: he paid his rent, for instance, at ten o'clock in the morning every quarter day, as long as he lived with me.

Such was the man whose assistance I had at last determined to ask. With infinite hesitation and embarrassment, I stated my circumstances. He fidgeted sadly, till I concluded almost inarticulate with agitation, by soliciting the loan of £300—offering, at the same time, to deposit with him the lease of my house as a collateral security for what he might advance me.

"My God!" he exclaimed, falling back in his chair, and elevating his hands.

"Would you favour me with this sum, Mr G——?" I inquired in a respectful tone.

"Do you take me, doctor, for a money-lender?"

"No, indeed, sir; but for an obliging friend as well as lodger, if you will allow me the liberty."

"Ha! you think me a rich old hunks come from India, to fling his gold at every one he sees?"

"May I beg an answer, sir?" said I, after a pause.

"I cannot lend it you, doctor," he replied calmly, and bowed me to the door. I rushed down stairs, almost gnashing my teeth with fury. The Deity seemed to have marked me with a curse. No one would listen to me!

The next day my rent was due; which, with Mr G——'s rent, and the savings of excruciating parsimony, I contrived to meet. Then came old L——! Good God! what were my feelings when I saw him hobble up to my door. I civilly assured him, with a quaking heart and ashy cheeks, but with the calmness of despair, that though it was not convenient to-day, he should have it in the morning of the next day. His greedy, black, Jewish eye seemed to dart into my very soul. He retired, apparently satisfied, and I almost fell down and blessed him on my knees for his forbearance.

It was on Wednesday, two days after Christmas, that my dear Emily came down stairs after her confinement. Though pale and languid, she looked very lovely, and her fondness for me seemed redoubled. By way of honouring the season, and welcoming my dear wife down stairs, in spite of my fearful embarrassments, I expended my last guinea in providing a tolerably comfortable dinner, such as I had not sat down to for many a long week. I was determined to cast care aside for one day at least. The little table was set; the small but savoury roast beef was on; and I was just drawing the cork of a solitary bottle of port, when a heavy knock was heard at the street door. I almost fainted at the sound—I knew not why. The servant answered the door, and two men entered the very parlour, holding a thin slip of parchment in their hands.

"In God's name, who are you?—what brings you here?" I inquired, or rather gasped—while my wife sat silent, trembling, and looking very faint.

"Are you the gentleman that is named here?" inquired one of the men, in a civil and even compassionate tone—showing me a *writ* issued by old L——, for the money I owed him! My poor wife saw my agitation, and the servant arrived just in time to preserve her from falling, for she had fainted. I had her carried to bed, and was permitted to wait by her bedside for a few moments; when, more dead than alive, I surrendered myself into the hands of the officers. "Lord, sir," said they as I walked between them, "this here is not, by no manner of means, an uncommon thing, d'ye see—thof it's rather hard, too, to leave one's dinner and one's wife so sudden! But you'll, no doubt, soon get bailed—and then, you see, there's a little time for turning in!" I answered not a syllable—for I felt suffocated. *Bail*—where was I—a poor, unknown, starving physician—to apply for it? Even

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if I could succeed in finding it, would it not be unprincipled to take their security when I had no conceivable means of meeting the fearful claim? What is the use of merely *postponing* the evil day, in order to aggravate its horrors? I shall never forget that half-hour, if I were to live a thousand years. I felt as if I were stepping into my grave. My heart was utterly withered within me.

A few hours beheld me the sullen and despairing occupant of the back attic of a sponging-house* near Leicester Square. The weather was bitterly inclement, yet no fire was allowed one who had not a farthing to pay for it—since I had slipped the only money I had in the world—three shillings—into the pocket of my insensible wife at parting. Had it not been for my poor Emily and my child, I think I should have put an end to my miserable existence; for *to prison I must go*—if there was no miracle to save me; and what was to become of Emily and her little one? Jewels she had none to pawn—my books had nearly all disappeared—the scanty remnants of our furniture were not worth selling. Great God! I was nearly frantic when I thought of all this. I sat up the whole night without fire or candle (for the brutal wretch in whose custody I was, suspected I had money with me, and would not part with it), till nearly seven o'clock in the morning, when I sank, in a state of stupor, on the bed, and fell asleep. How long I continued so I know not; for I was roused from a dreary dream by some one embracing me, and repeatedly kissing my lips and forehead. It was my poor Emily! who, at the imminent risk of her life, having found out where I was, had hurried to bring me the news of release; for she had succeeded in obtaining the sum of £300 from our lodger, which I had in vain solicited. We returned home immediately. I hastened up-stairs to our lodger to express the most enthusiastic thanks He listened without interruption, and then coldly replied—"I would rather have your note of hand, sir."† Almost choked with mortification at receiving such an unfeeling rebuff, I gave him what he asked, expecting nothing more than that he would presently act the part of old L——. He did not, however, trouble me.

The few pounds above what was due to our relentless creditor L——, sufficed to meet some of our more pressing exigencies; but, as they gradually disappeared, my prospects became darker than ever. The agitation and distress which recent occurrences had occasioned, threw my wife into a low, nervous, hysterical state, which added to my misfortunes; and her little infant was sensibly pining away, as if in unconscious sympathy with its wretched parents. Where *now* were we to look for help? We had a new creditor, to a serious amount, in Mr G——, our lodger; whatever, therefore, might be the extremity of our distress, applying to *him* was out of the question; nay, it would be well if he proved a lenient creditor. The hateful annuity was again becoming due. It pressed like an incubus upon us. The form of old L—— flitted incessantly around us, as though it were a fiend, goading us on to destruction. I am sure I must often have raved frightfully in my sleep; for more than once I was woke by my wife clinging to me, and exclaiming, in terrified accents, "Oh, hush, hush——don't, for Heaven's sake, say so!"

To add to my misery, she and the infant began to keep their bed; and our lodger, whose constitution had been long ago broken up, began to fail rapidly. I was in daily and most harassing attendance on him; but, of course, could not expect a fee, as I was

* "*Une maison de dépôt,*" says the French translator; adding, amusingly enough, in a note—"(1.) *Springing-house* (!) est maison où l'on dépose le debiteur, avant son installation définitive: leur état de la malpropreté et les impôts odieux que l'on y prélève sur les malheureux que l'on y amène, sont, dit-on, une des plaies les plus honteuses de la legislation, et de la pénalité Anglaise."

† "*La reconnaissance.*—Selon la loi Anglaise, la reconnaissance d'une dette, sans époque assignée pour le paiement, est toujours valable pour l'arrestation du signataire."—*Note of French Translator.*

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already his debtor to a large amount. I had three patients who paid me regularly, but only one was a daily patient; and I was obliged to lay by, out of these small incomings, a cruel portion to meet my rent and L——'s annuity. Surely my situation was now like that of the fabled scorpion, surrounded with fiery destruction! Every one in the house, and my few acquaintances without, expressed surprise and commiseration at my wretched appearance. I was worn almost to a skeleton; and when I looked suddenly in the glass, my worn and hollow looks startled me. My fears magnified the illness of my wife. The whole world seemed melting away from me into gloom and darkness.

My thoughts, I well recollect, seemed to be perpetually occupied with the dreary image of a desolate churchyard, wet and cold with the sleets and storms of winter. Oh, that I, and my wife and child, I have sometimes madly thought, were sleeping peacefully in our long home! Why were we brought into the world?—why did my nature prompt me to seek my present station in society?—merely for the purpose of reducing me to the dreadful condition of him of old, whose only consolation from his friends was—Curse God, and die! What had we done—what had our forefathers done—that Providence should thus frown upon us, thwarting everything we attempted?

Fortune, however, at last seemed tired of persecuting me; and my affairs took a favourable turn when most they needed it, and when least I expected it. On what small and insignificant things do our fates depend! Truly—

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

About eight o'clock one evening in the month of March, I was walking down the Haymarket, as usual, in a very disconsolate mood, in search of some shop where I might execute a small commission for my wife. The whole neighbourhood in front of the Opera-house door exhibited the usual scene of uproar, arising from clashing carriages and quarrelsome coachmen. I was standing at the box-door, watching, with sickening feelings, the company descend from their carriages, when a cry was heard from the very centre of the crowd of coaches—"Run for a doctor!" I rushed instantly to the spot, at the peril of my life, announcing my profession. I soon made my way up to the open door of a carriage, from which issued the moanings of a female, evidently in great agony. The accident was this: A young lady had suddenly stretched her arm through the open window of the carriage conveying her to the opera, for the purpose of pointing out to one of her companions a brilliant illumination of one of the opposite houses. At that instant their coachman, dashing forward to gain the open space opposite the box-door, shot, with great velocity and within a hairbreadth distance, past a retiring carriage. The consequence was inevitable: a sudden shriek announced the dislocation of the young lady's shoulder, and the shocking laceration of the fore-arm and hand. When I arrived at the carriage-door, the unfortunate sufferer was lying motionless in the arms of an elderly gentleman and a young lady, both of them, as might be expected, dreadfully agitated. It was the Earl of —— and his two daughters. Having entered the carriage, I placed my fair patient in such a position as would prevent her suffering more than was necessary from the motion of the carriage—despatched one of the servants for Mr Cline, to meet us on our arrival, and then the coachman was ordered to drive home as fast as possible. I need not say more than that, by Mr Cline's skill, the dislocation was quickly reduced, and the wounded hand and arm duly dressed. I then prescribed what medicines were necessary—received a check for ten guineas from the Earl, accompanied with fervent thanks for my prompt attentions, and was requested to call as early as possible the next morning.

As soon as I had left his lordship's door, I shot homeward like an arrow. My good fortune (truly it is an ill wind that blows *nobody* any good) was almost too much for me. I could scarce

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repress the violence of my emotions, but felt a continual inclination to relieve myself, by singing, shouting, or committing some other such extravagance. I arrived at home in a very few minutes, and rushed breathless up-stairs, joy glittering in my eyes, to communicate—inarticulate with emotion—my good fortune to my wife, and congratulate ourselves that the door of professional success seemed at length really opened to us. How tenderly she tried to calm my excitement, and moderate my expectations, without, at the same time, depressing my spirits! I did certainly feel somewhat damped, when I recollected the little incident of my introduction to Sir William ——, and its abrupt and unexpected termination. *This*, however, seemed a very different affair; and the event proved that my expectations were not ill-founded.

I continued in constant attendance on my fair patient, who was really a very lovely girl; and, by unremitting and anxious attentions, so conciliated the favour of the Earl and the rest of the family, that the Countess, who had long been an invalid, was committed to my care, jointly with that of the family physician. I need hardly say, that my poor services were most nobly remunerated; and more than this—having succeeded in securing the confidence of the family, it was not many weeks before I had the honour of visiting one or two of their connections of high rank: and I felt conscious that I was laying the foundation of a fashionable and lucrative practice. With joy unutterable, I contrived to be ready for our half-yearly tormentor, old L——; and somewhat surprised him, by asking, with an easy air—oh, the luxury of that moment!—when he wished for a return of his principal. Of course, he was not desirous of losing such interest as I was paying!

I had seen too much of the bitterness of adversity to suffer the dawn of good fortune to elate me into too great confidence. I now husbanded my resources with rigorous economy, and had, in return, the inexpressible satisfaction of being able to pay my way, and stand fair with *all* my creditors. Oh, the rapture of being able to pay every one his own! My beloved Emily appeared in that society which she was born to ornament; and we numbered several families of high respectability among our visiting friends. As is usual in such cases, whenever accident threw me in the way of those who formerly scowled upon me contemptuously, I was received with an excess of civility. The very physician who sent me the munificent donation of a guinea, I met in consultation, and made his cheeks tingle, by returning him the *loan* he had advanced me!

In four years' time from the occurrence at the Haymarket, I contrived to pay old L—— his £3000 (though he did not live a month after signing the receipt), and thus escaped—blessed be God!—for ever from the fangs of the money-lenders. A word or two, also, about our Indian lodger. He died about eighteen months after the accident I have been relating. His sole heir was a young lieutenant in the navy; and very much to my surprise and gratification, in a codicil to old Mr G——'s will, I was left a legacy of £2000, including the £300 he had lent me, saying, it was some return for the many attentions he had received from us since he had been our lodger, and as a mark of his approbation of the honourable and virtuous principles by which, he said, he had always perceived our conduct to be actuated.

Twelve years from this period, my income amounted to between £3000 and £4000 a-year; and as my family was increasing, I thought my means warranted a more extensive establishment. I therefore removed into a large and elegant house, and set up my carriage. The recollection of past times has taught me at least one useful lesson—whether my life be long or short—to bear success with moderation, and never to turn a deaf ear to applications from the younger and less successful members of my profession.

Sweet are the uses of adversity;
Which, like a toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.



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# CHAPTER II.

## CANCER.

One often hears of the great firmness of the female sex, and their powers of enduring a degree of physical pain, which would utterly break down the stubborn strength of man. An interesting exemplification of this remark will be found in the short narrative immediately following. The event made a strong impression on my mind at the time, and I thought it well worthy of an entry in my Diary.

I had for several months been in constant attendance on a Mrs St——, a young married lady of considerable family and fortune, who was the victim of that terrible scourge of the female sex, a cancer. To great personal attractions, she added uncommon sweetness of disposition; and the fortitude with which she submitted to the agonising inroads of her malady, together with her ardent expressions of gratitude for such temporary alleviations as her anxious medical attendants could supply, contributed to inspire me with a very lively interest in her fate. I can conscientiously say, that, during the whole period of my attendance, I never heard a word of complaint fall from her, nor witnessed any indications of impatience or irritability. I found her, one morning, stretched on the crimson sofa in the drawing-room; and, though her pallid features and gently corrugated eyebrows evidenced the intense agony she was suffering, on my inquiring what sort of a night she had passed, she replied, in a calm but tremulous tone, "Oh, doctor, I have had a dreadful night! but I am glad Captain St—— was not with me; for it would have made him very wretched." At that moment, a fine flaxen-haired little boy, her first and only child, came running into the room, his blue laughing eyes glittering with innocent merriment. I took him on my knee and amused him with my watch, in order that he might not disturb his mother. The poor sufferer, after gazing on him with an air of intense fondness for some moments, suddenly covered her eyes with her hand (oh! how slender—how snowy—how almost transparent was that hand!), and I presently saw the tears trickling through her fingers; but she uttered not a word. There was the *mother!* The aggravated malignity of her disorder rendered an operation at length inevitable. The eminent surgeon who, jointly with myself, was in regular attendance on her, feelingly communicated the intelligence, and asked whether she thought she had fortitude enough to submit to an operation? She assured him, with a sweet smile of resignation, that she had for some time been suspecting as much, and had made up her mind to submit to it; but on two conditions—that her husband (who was then at sea) should not be informed of it till it was over; and that, during the operation, she should not be in anywise bound or blindfolded. Her calm and decisive manner convinced me that remonstrance would be useless. Sir —— looked at me with a doubtful air. She observed it, and said, "I see what you are thinking, Sir ——; but I hope to show you that a woman has more courage than you seem willing to give her credit for." In short, after the surgeon had acquiesced in the latter condition—to which he had especially demurred—a day was fixed for the operation—subject, of course, to Mrs

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St——'s state of health. When the Wednesday arrived, it was with some agitation that I entered Sir ——'s carriage, in company with himself and his senior pupil, Mr ——. I could scarce avoid a certain nervous tremor—unprofessional as it may seem—when I saw the servant place the operating-case on the seat of the carriage. "Are you sure you have everything ready, Mr ——?" inquired Sir ——, with a calm, business-like air, which somewhat irritated me. On being assured of the affirmative, and after cautiously casting his eye over the case of instruments,* to make assurance doubly sure, we drove off. We arrived at Mrs St——'s, who resided a few miles from town, about two o'clock in the afternoon, and were immediately ushered into the room in which the operation was to be performed—a back parlour, the window of which looked into a beautiful garden. I shall be pardoned, I hope, for acknowledging, that the glimpse I caught of the pale and disordered countenance of the servant, as he retired after showing us into the room, somewhat disconcerted me; for, in addition to the deep interest I felt in the fate of the lovely sufferer, I had always an abhorrence for the operative part of the profession, which many years of practice did not suffice to remove. The necessary arrangements being at length completed—consisting of a hateful array of instruments, cloths, sponge, warm water, &c. &c.—a message was sent to Mrs St——, to inform her all was ready.

Sir —— was just making a jocular and not very well-timed allusion to my agitated air, when the door was opened, and Mrs St—— entered, followed by her two attendants. Her step was firm, her air composed, and her pale features irradiated with a smile—sad, however, as the cold twilight of October. She was then about twenty-six or seven years of age—and, under all the disadvantageous circumstances in which she was placed, looked at that moment a beautiful woman. Her hair was light auburn, and hung back neglectedly over a forehead and neck white as marble. Her full blue eyes, which usually beamed with a delicious pensive expression from beneath

—— the soft languor of the drooping lid,

were now lighted with the glitter of a restlessness and agitation, which the noblest degree of self-command could not entirely conceal or repress. Her features were regular—her nose and mouth exquisitely chiselled—and her complexion fair, almost to transparency. Indeed, an eminent medical writer has remarked, that the most beautiful women are generally the subjects of this terrible disease. A large Indian shawl was thrown over her shoulders, and she wore a white muslin dressing-gown. And was it this innocent and beautiful being who was doomed to writhe beneath the torture and disfigurement of the operating knife? My heart ached. A decanter of port wine and some glasses were placed on a small table near the window; she beckoned me towards it, and was going to speak.

"Allow me, my dear madam, to pour you a glass of wine," said I—or rather faltered.

"If it would do me good, doctor," she whispered. She barely touched the glass with her lips, and then handed one to me, saying, with assumed cheerfulness, "Come, doctor, I see you need it as much as I do, after all. Yes, doctor," she continued, with emphasis, "you are very, *very* kind and feeling to me." When I had set down the glass, she continued, "Dear doctor, do forgive a woman's weakness, and try if you can hold this letter, which I received yesterday from Captain ——, and in which he speaks very fondly, so that my eyes may rest on his dear handwriting all the while I am sitting here, without being noticed by any one else—will you?"

"Madam, you must really excuse me—it will agitate you—I must beg"——

"You are mistaken," she replied, with firmness; "it will rather com-

* I once saw the life of a patient lost, merely through the want of such simple precaution as that of Sir ——, in the present instance. An indispensable instrument was suddenly required in the midst of the operation; and, to the dismay of the operator and those around him, there was none at hand!

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pose me. And if I *should*"—— expire, she was going to have said—but her tongue refused utterance. She then put the letter into my hand—hers was cold, icy cold, and clammy—but I did not perceive it tremble.

"In return, madam, you must give me leave to hold your hand during the operation."

"What—you fear me, doctor?" she replied, with a faint smile, but did not refuse my request. At this moment, Sir —— approached us with a cheerful air, saying, "Well, madam, is your tête-à-tête finished? I want to get this little matter over, and give you permanent ease." I do not think there ever lived a professional man who could speak with such an assuring air as Sir ——!

"I am ready, Sir ——. Are the servants sent out?" she inquired from one of the women present.

"Yes, madam," she replied, in tears.

"And my little Harry?" Mrs St—— asked, in a fainter tone. She was answered in the affirmative.

"Then I am prepared," said she, and sat down in the chair that was placed for her. One of the attendants then removed the shawl from her shoulders, and Mrs St—— herself, with perfect composure, assisted in displacing as much of her dress as was necessary. She then suffered Sir —— to place her on the corner side of the chair, with her left arm thrown over the back of it, and her face looking over her left shoulder. She gave me her right hand; and, with my left, I endeavoured to hold Captain St——'s letter, as she had desired. She smiled sweetly, as if to assure me of her fortitude; and there was something so indescribably affecting in the expression of her full blue eyes, that it almost broke my heart. I shall never forget that smile as long as I live! Half closing her eyes, she fixed them on the letter I held—and did not once remove them till all was over. Nothing could console me at this trying moment, but a conviction of the consummate skill of Sir ——, who now, with a calm eye and a steady hand, commenced the operation. At the instant of the first incision, her whole frame quivered with a convulsive shudder, and her cheeks became ashy pale. I prayed inwardly that she might faint, so that the earlier stage of the operation might be got over while she was in a state of insensibility. It was not the case, however—her eyes continued riveted, in one long burning gaze of fondness, on the beloved handwriting of her husband; and she moved not a limb, nor uttered more than an occasional sigh, during the whole of the protracted and painful operation. When the last bandage had been applied, she whispered almost inarticulately, "Is it all over, doctor?"

"Yes, madam," I replied, "and we are going to carry you up to bed."

"No, no—I think I can walk—I will try," said she, and endeavoured to rise; but on Sir —— assuring her that the motion might perhaps induce fatal consequences, she desisted, and we carried her, sitting in the chair, up to bed. The instant he had laid her down she swooned—and continued so long insensible, that Sir —— held a looking-glass over her mouth and nostrils, apprehensive that the vital energies had at last sunk under the terrible struggle. She recovered, however; and under the influence of an opiate draught, slept for several hours.

* * * *

Mrs St—— recovered, though very slowly; and I attended her assiduously—sometimes two or three times a-day, till she could be removed to the seaside. I shall not easily forget an observation she made at the last visit I paid her. She was alluding, one morning, distantly and delicately, to the personal disfigurement she had suffered. I, of course, said all that was soothing.

"But, doctor, my *husband*"—— said she suddenly, while a faint crimson mantled on her cheek—adding, falteringly, after a pause, "I think St—— will love me yet!"

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# CHAPTER III.

## THE DENTIST AND THE COMEDIAN.

Friday, ——— 18—. A ludicrous contre-temps happened to-day, which I wish I could describe as forcibly as it struck me. Mr ——, the well-known comedian, with whom I was on terms of intimacy, after having suffered so severely from the toothach as to be prevented, for two evenings, from taking his part in the play, sent, under my direction, for Monsieur ——, a fashionable dentist, then but recently imported from France. While I was sitting with my friend, endeavouring to "screw his courage up to the sticking place," Monsieur arrived, duly furnished with the "tools of his craft." The comedian sat down with a rueful visage, and eyed the dentist's formidable preparations with a piteous and disconcerted air. As soon as I had taken my station behind, for the purpose of holding the patient's head, the gum was lanced without much ado; but as the doomed tooth was a very formidable broad-rooted molar, Monsieur prepared for a vigorous effort. He was just commencing the dreadful wrench, when he suddenly relaxed his hold, retired a step or two from his patient, and burst into a loud fit of laughter! Up started the astounded comedian, and, with clenched fists, demanded furiously, "What the —— he meant by such conduct?" The little bewhiskered foreigner, however, continued standing at a little distance, still so convulsed with laughter as to disregard the menacing movements of his patient; and exclaiming, "Ah, mon Dieu!—ver good—ver good—bien! ha, ha!—Be Gar, Monsieur, you pull one such d—— queer, extraordinaire comique face—be Gar, like one big fiddle!" or words to that effect. The dentist was right: Mr ——'s features were odd enough at all times; but, on the present occasion, they suffered such excruciating contortions—such a strange puckering together of the mouth and cheeks, and upturning of the eyes, that it was ten thousand times more laughable than any artificially distorted features with which he used to set Drury Lane in a roar!—Oh that a painter had been present!—There was, on one side, my friend, standing in a menacing attitude, with both fists clenched, his left cheek swollen, and looking as if the mastication of a large apple had been suddenly suspended, and his whole features exhibiting a grotesque expression of mingled pain, indecision, and fury. Then there was the operator beginning to look a little startled at the probable consequences of his sally; and, lastly, I stood a little aside, almost suffocated with suppressed laughter! At length, however, ——'s perception of the ridiculous prevailed; and after a very hearty laugh, and exclaiming, "I *must* have looked odd, I suppose!" he once more resigned himself into the hands of Monsieur, and the tooth was out in a twinkling.

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# CHAPTER IV.

## A SCHOLAR'S DEATHBED.

[MUCH more of the following short, but melancholy, narrative, might have been committed to press; but as it would have related chiefly to a mad devotion to *alchymy*, which some of Mr ——'s few posthumous papers abundantly evidence, it is omitted, lest the reader should consider the details as romantic or improbable. All that is worth recording is told; and it is hoped, that some young men of powerful, undisciplined, and ambitious minds, will find their account in an attentive consideration of the fate of a kindred spirit. *Bene facit, qui ex aliorum erroribus sibi exemplum sumat.*]

Thinking, one morning, that I had gone through the whole of my usual levee of home patients, I was preparing to go out, when the servant informed me there was one yet to be spoken with, who, he thought, must have been asleep in the corner of the room, else he could not have failed to summon him in his turn. Directing him to be shown in immediately, I retook my place at my desk. The servant, in a few moments, ushered in a young man, who seemed to have scarce strength enough, even with the assistance of a walking-stick, to totter to a chair opposite me. I was much struck with his appearance, which was that of one in reduced circumstances. His clothes, though perfectly clean and neat, were faded and threadbare; and his coat was buttoned up to his chin, where it was joined by a black silk neckerchief, in such a manner as to lead me to suspect the absence of a shirt. He was rather below than above the average height, and seemed wasted almost to a shadow. There was an air of superior ease and politeness in his demeanour; and an expression about his countenance, sickly and sallow though it was, so melancholy, mild, and intelligent, that I could not help viewing him with peculiar interest.

"I was afraid, my friend, I should have missed you," said I, in a kind tone, "as I was on the point of going out."—"I heard your carriage drive up to the door, doctor, and shall not detain you more than a few moments: nay, I will call to-morrow, if that would be more convenient," he replied faintly, suddenly pressing his hand to his side, as though the effort of speaking occasioned him pain. I assured him I had a quarter of an hour at his service, and begged he would proceed at once to state the nature of his complaint. He detailed what I had anticipated from his appearance—all the symptoms of a very advanced stage of pulmonary consumption. He expressed himself in very select and forcible language, and once or twice, when at a loss for what he conceived an adequate expression in English, chose such an appropriate Latin phrase, that the thought perpetually suggested itself to me, while he was speaking—*a starved scholar!* He had not the most distant allusion to poverty, but confined himself to the leading symptoms of his indisposition. I determined, however, (*haud præteritorum immemor!*) to ascertain his circumstances, with a view, if possible, of relieving them. I asked if he eat animal food with relish—enjoyed his dinner—whether his meals were regular. He coloured, and hesitated a little, for I put the question searchingly; and replied, with some embarrassment, that he did not, certainly, *then* eat

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regularly, nor enjoy his food when he did. I soon found that he was in very straitened circumstances; that, in short, he was sinking rapidly under the pressure of want and harassing anxiety, which alone had accelerated, if not wholly induced, his present illness; and that all that he had to expect from medical aid was a little alleviation. I prescribed a few simple medicines, and then asked him in what part of the town he resided.

"I am afraid, doctor," said he modestly, "I shall be unable to afford your visiting me at my own lodgings. I will occasionally call on you here, as a morning patient"—and he proffered me half-a-guinea. The conviction that it was probably the very last he had in the world, and a keen recollection of similar scenes in my own history, almost brought the tears into my eyes. I refused the fee, of course; and prevailed on him to let me set him down, as I was driving close past his residence. He seemed overwhelmed with gratitude; and, with a blush, hinted that he was "not quite in carriage costume." He lived in one of the small streets leading from May-fair; and after having made a note in my tablets of his name and number, I set him down, promising him an early call.

The clammy pressure of his wasted fingers, as I shook his hand at parting, remained with me all that day. I could not dismiss from my mind the mild and sorrowful countenance of this young man, go where I would, and I was on the point of mentioning the incident to a most excellent and generous nobleman, whom I was then attending, and soliciting his assistance, but the thought that it was premature checked me. There *might* be something unworthy in the young man; he might *possibly* be an—impostor. These were hard thoughts—chilling and unworthy suspicions—but I could not resist them; alas! an eighteen years' intercourse with a deceitful world has alone taught me how to entertain them!

As my wife dined a little way out of town that evening, I hastily swallowed a solitary meal, and set out in quest of my morning patient. With some difficulty I found the house; it was the meanest, and in the meanest street I had visited for months. I knocked at the door, which was open, and surrounded by a babbling throng of dirty children. A slatternly woman, with a child in her arms, answered my summons. Mr ——, she said, lived there, in the top floor; but he was just gone out for a few moments, she supposed, "to get a mouthful of victuals, but I was welcome to go up and wait for him, since," said the rude wretch, "there was not much to make away with, howsoever!" One of her children led me up the narrow, dirty staircase, and having ushered me into the room, left me to my meditations. A wretched hole it was in which I was sitting! The evening sun streamed in discoloured rays through the unwashed panes, here and there mended with brown paper, and sufficed to show me that the only furniture consisted of a miserable, curtainless bed (the disordered clothes showing that the weary limbs of the wretched occupant had but recently left it)—three old rush-bottom chairs, and a rickety deal table—on which were scattered several pages of manuscript, a letter or two, pens, ink, and a few books. There was no chest of drawers—nor did I see anything likely to serve as a substitute. Poor Mr —— probably carried about with him all he had in the world! There was a small sheet of writing-paper pinned over the mantelpiece (if such it deserved to be called), which I gazed at with a sigh: it bore simply the outline of a coffin, with Mr ——'s initials, and "*obiit* —— 18—," evidently in his own handwriting. Curious to see the kind of books he preferred, I took them up and examined them. There were, if I recollect right, a small Amsterdam edition of Plautus—a Horace—a much befingered copy of Aristophanes—a neat pocket edition of Æschylus—a small copy of the works of Lactantius—and two odd volumes of English books. I had no intention of being impertinently inquisitive, but my eye accidentally lit on the uppermost manuscript, and seeing it to be in the Greek character, I

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took it up, and found a few verses of Greek sapphics, entitled, Εἰς τὴν νῦκτα τελωταίαν—evidently the recent composition of Mr ——. He entered the room as I was laying down the paper, and started at seing a stranger, for it seems the people of the house had not taken the trouble to inform him I was waiting. On discovering who it was, he bowed politely, and gave me his hand; but the sudden agitation my presence had occasioned, deprived him of utterance. I thought I could almost *hear* the palpitation of his heart. I brought him to a chair, and begged him to be calm.

"You are not worse, Mr ——, I hope, since I saw you this morning?" I inquired. He whispered almost inarticulately, holding his hand to his left side, that he was always worse in the evenings. I felt his pulse; it beat 130! I discovered that he had gone out for the purpose of trying to get employment in a neighbouring printing-office! —but, having failed, had returned in a state of deeper depression than usual. The perspiration rolled from his brow almost faster than he could wipe it away. I sat by him for nearly two minutes, holding his hand without uttering a word, for I was deeply affected. At length I begged he would forgive my inquiring how it was that a young man of talent and education, like himself, could be reduced to a state of such utter destitution? While I was waiting for an answer, he suddenly fell from his chair in a swoon. The exertion of walking, the pressure of disappointment, and, I fear, the almost unbroken fast of the day, added to the sudden shock occasioned by encountering me in his room, had completely prostrated the small remains of his strength. When he had a little revived, I succeeded in laying him on the bed, and instantly summoned the woman of the house. After some time, she sauntered lazily to the door, and asked me what I wanted. "Are you the person that attends on this gentleman, my good woman?" I inquired.

"Marry! come up, sir," she replied in a loud tone—"I've no manner of cause for attending on him, not I; he ought to attend on himself: and as for his being a *gentleman*," she continued, with an insolent sneer, for which I felt heartily inclined to throw her down stairs, "not a stiver of his money have I seen for this three weeks for his rent, and" —— Seeing the fluent virago was warming, and approaching close to my unfortunate patient's bedside, I stopped her short by putting half-a-guinea into her hand, and directing her to purchase a bottle of port wine; at the same time hinting, that, if she conducted herself properly, I would see her rent paid myself. I then shut the door, and resumed my seat by Mr ——, who was trembling violently all over with agitation, and endeavoured to soothe him. The more I said, however, and the kinder were my tones, the more was he affected. At length he burst into a flood of tears, and continued weeping for some time like a child. I saw it was hysterical, and that it was best to let his feelings have their full course. His nervous excitement at length gradually subsided, and he began to converse with tolerable coolness

"Doctor," he faltered, "your conduct is very—very noble—it *must* be disinterested," pointing, with a bitter air, to the wretched room in which we were sitting.

"I feel sure, Mr ——, that you have done nothing to *merit* your present misfortunes," I replied, with a serious and inquiring air.

"Yes—yes, I have!—I have indulged in wild ambitious hopes—lived in absurd dreams of future greatness—been educated beyond my fortunes—and formed tastes, and cherished feelings, incompatible with the station it seems I was born to—beggary or daily labour!" was his answer, with as much vehemence as his weakness would allow.

"But, Mr ——, your friends—your relatives—they cannot be apprised of your situation."

"Alas! doctor, friends I have none —unless you will permit me to name the last and noblest—yourself; relatives, several."

"And they, of course, do not know

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of your illness and straitened circumstances?"

"They do, doctor—and kindly assure me I have brought it on myself. To do them justice, however, they could not, I believe, efficiently help me, if they would."

"Why, have you offended them, Mr ——? Have they cast you off?"

"Not avowedly—not in so many words. They have simply refused to receive or answer any more of my letters. Possibly I may have offended them, but am content to meet them hereafter, and try the justice of the case —*there*," said Mr ——, solemnly pointing upwards. "Well I know, and so do you, doctor, that my days on earth are very few, and likely to be very bitter also." It was in vain I pressed him to tell me who his relatives were, and suffer me to solicit their personal attendance on his last moments. "It is altogether useless, doctor, to ask me further," said he, raising himself a little in bed—"my father and mother are both dead, and no power on earth shall extract from me a syllable further. It *is* hard," he continued, bursting again into tears, "if I must *die* amid their taunts and reproaches." I felt quite at a loss what to say to all this. There was something very singular, if not reprehensible, in his manner of alluding to his relatives, which led me to fear that he was by no means free from blame. Had I not felt myself very delicately situated, and dreaded even the possibility of hurting his morbidly irritable feelings, I felt inclined to have asked him how he thought of *existing* without their aid, especially in his forlorn and helpless state—having neither friends nor the means of obtaining them. I thought also, that, short as had been my intimacy with him, I had discerned symptoms of a certain obstinacy, and haughty imperiousness of temper, which would sufficiently account, if not for occasioning, at least for widening, any unhappy breach which might have occurred in his family. But what was to be done? I could not let him starve; as I had voluntarily stepped in to his assistance, I determined to make his last moments easy—at least as far as lay in my power.

A little to anticipate the course of my narrative, I may here state what information concerning him was elicited in the course of our various interviews. His father and mother had left Ireland, their native place, early, and gone to Jamaica, where they lived as slave superintendents. They left their only son to the care of the wife's brother-in-law, who put him to school, where he much distinguished himself. On the faith of it, he contrived to get to the college in Dublin, where he stayed two years: and then, in a confident reliance on his own talents, and the sum of £50, which was sent him from Jamaica, with intelligence of the death of both his parents in impoverished circumstances, he had come up to London, it seems, with no very definite end in view. Here he continued for about two years; but, in addition to the failure of his health, all his efforts to establish himself proved abortive. He contrived to glean a scanty sum, Heaven knows how, which was gradually lessening at a time when his impaired health rather required that his resources should be augmented. He had no friends in respectable life, whose influence or wealth might have been serviceable; and, at the time he called on me, he had not more in the world than the solitary half guinea he proffered to me as a fee. I never learned the names of any of his relatives; but from several things occasionally dropped in the heat of conversation, it was clear there must have been unhappy differences.

To return, however. As the evening was far advancing, and I had one or two patients yet to visit, I began to think of taking my departure. I enjoined him strictly to keep his bed till I saw him again, to preserve as calm and equable a frame of mind as possible, and to dismiss all anxiety for the future, as I would gladly supply his present necessities, and send him a civil and attentive nurse. He tried to thank me, but his emotions choked his utterance. He grasped my hand with convulsive energy. His eye spoke elo-

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quently; but, alas! it shone with the fierce and unnatural lustre of consumption, as though, I have often thought in such cases, the conscious soul was glowing with the reflected light of its kindred element—eternity. I knew it was impossible for him to survive many days, from several unequivocal symptoms of what is called, in common language, a galloping consumption. I was as good as my word, and sent him a nurse (the mother of one of my servants), who was charged to pay him the utmost attention in her power. My wife also sent him a little bed-furniture, linen, preserves, jellies, and other small matters of that sort. I visited him every evening, and found him on each occasion verifying my apprehensions, for he was sinking rapidly. His mental energies, however, seemed to increase inversely with the decline of his physical powers. His conversation was animated, various, and, at times, enchainingly interesting. I have sometimes sat at his bedside for several hours together, wondering how one so young (he was not more than two or three and twenty) could have acquired so much information. He spoke with spirit and justness on the leading political topics of the day; and I particularly recollect his making some very noble reflections on the character and exploits of Buonaparte, who was then blazing in the zenith of his glory. Still, however, the current of his thoughts and language was frequently tinged with the enthusiasm and extravagance of delirium. Of this he seemed himself conscious; for he would sometimes suddenly stop, and pressing his hand to his forehead, exclaim, "Doctor, doctor, I am fäiling here—*here!*" He acknowledged that he had, from his childhood, given himself up to the dominion of ambition; and that his whole life had been spent in the most extravagant and visionary expectations. He would smile bitterly when he recounted some of what he justly stigmatised as his insane projects. "The objects of my ambition," he said, "have been vague and general; I never knew exactly where, or what, I would be. Had my powers, such as they are, been concentrated on one point—had I formed a more just and modest estimate of my abilities—I might possibly have become something * * * * Besides, doctor, I had no *money*—no solid substratum to build upon; there was the rotten point! O doctor!" he continued, with a deep sigh, "if I could but have seen these things three years ago, as I see them *now*, I might at this moment have been a sober and respectable member of society; but now I am dying—a hanger-on—a fool—a beggar!" and he burst into tears. "You, doctor," he presently continued, "are accustomed, I suppose, to listen to these deathbed repinings—these soul-scourgings—these wailings over a badly-spent life! Oh yes; as I am nearing eternity I seem to look at things—at my own mind and heart, especially—through the medium of a strange, searching, unearthly light! Oh! how many, many things it makes distinct, which I would fain have forgotten for ever! Do you recollect the terrible language of Scripture, doctor, which compares the human breast to *a cage of unclean birds?*"—I left him that evening deeply convinced of the compulsory truths he had uttered; I never thought so seriously before. It is some Scotch divine who has said, that one deathbed preaches a more startling sermon than a bench of bishops.

* * * *

Mr —— was an excellent and thorough Greek scholar, perfectly well versed in the Greek dramatists, and passionately fond, in particular, of Sophocles. I recollect his reciting, one evening, with great force and feeling, the touching exclamation of the chorus, in the *Œdipus Tyrannus*—

> Ὦ πόνοι—ἀναρίθμα γὰρ
> φέρω πήματα,
> νοσεῖ δέ μοι πρόσπας στόλος,
> οὐδ' ἴσι φρενῶδος ἴγχος
> ὦ τις ἀλεξίσει,* &c.—167-172.

—which, he said, was never absent from his mind, sleeping or waking.

* Ah me! I groan beneath the pressure of innumerable sorrows; truly my substance is languishing away, nor can I devise any means of bettering my condition, or discover any source of consolation.

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I once asked him, if he did not regret having devoted his life almost exclusively to the study of the classics. He replied, with enthusiasm, "No, doctor—no, no! I should be an ingrate if I did. How can I regret having lived in constant converse, through their works, with the greatest and noblest men that ever breathed! I have lived in Elysium—have breathed the celestial air of those hallowed plains, while engaged in the study of the philosophy and poetry of Greece and Rome. Yes, it is a consolation even for my bitter and premature deathbed, to think that my mind will quit this wretched, diseased, unworthy body, imbued with the refinement—redolent of the eternal freshness and beauty of the most exquisite poetry and philosophy the world ever saw! With my faculties quickened and strengthened, I shall go confidently, and claim kindred with the great ones of Eternity. They know I love their works—have consumed all the oil of my life in their study, and they will welcome their son—their disciple." Ill as he was, Mr —— uttered these sentiments (as nearly as I can recollect, in the very words I have given) with an energy, an enthusiasm, and an eloquence, which I never saw surpassed. He faltered suddenly, however, from this lofty pitch of excitement, and complained bitterly that his devotion to ancient literature had engendered a morbid sensibility, which had rendered him totally unfit for the ordinary business of life, or intermixture with society. * * *

Often I found him sitting up in bed, and reading his favourite play, the *Prometheus Vinctus* of Æschylus, while his pale and wasted features glowed with delighted enthusiasm. He told me that, in his estimation, there was an air of grandeur and romance about that play, such as was not equalled by any of the productions of the other Greek dramatists; and that the opening dialogue was peculiarly impressive and affecting. He had committed to memory nearly three-fourths of the whole play! I on one occasion asked him, how it came to pass that a person of his superior classical attainments had not obtained some tolerably lucrative engagement as an usher or tutor? He answered, with rather a haughty air, that he would rather have broken stones on the highway. "To hear," said he, "the magnificent language of Greece, the harmonious cadences of the Romans, mangled and disfigured by stupid lads and duller ushers—oh! it would have been such a profanation as the sacred groves of old suffered, when their solemn silence was disturbed by a rude unhallowed throng of Bacchanalians. I should have expired, doctor!" I told him I could not help lamenting such an absurd and morbid sensitiveness; at which he seemed exceedingly piqued. He possibly thought I should rather have admired than reprobated the lofty tone he assumed. I asked him if the stations, of which he spoke with such supercilious contempt, had not been joyfully occupied by some of the greatest scholars that had ever lived? He replied simply, with a cold air, that it was his misfortune, not his fault. He told me, however, that his classical acquirements had certainly been capable of something like a profitable employment; for that, about two months before he had called on me, he had nearly come to terms with a bookseller, for publishing a poetical version of the comedies of Aristophanes; that he had nearly completed one, the ΝΕΦΕΛΑΙ, if I recollect right, when the great difficulty of the task, and the wretched remuneration offered, so dispirited him, that he threw it aside in disgust.*

* Among his papers I found the following spirited and close version of one of the choral odes in the *Nubes*, commencing,

*Αμφί μοι αὖτε Φοῖβ' ἄναξ*
*Δήλιε*, &c.

Thee, too, great Phœbus! I invoke,
Thou Delian King,
Who dwell'st on Cynthia's lofty rock,
Thy passage hither wing,
Blest Goddess! whom Ephesian splendours hold
In temples bright with gold,
'Mid Lydian maidens nobly worshipping!
And thee, our native deity,
Pallas, our city's guardian, thou!
Who wields the dreadful Ægis. Thee,
Thee, too, gay Bacchus, from Parnassian height,
Ruddy with festive torches' glow—
To crown the sacred choir, I thee invite!

Those who are conversant with the original, will perceive that many of the difficult Greek expressions are rendered into literal English.

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His only means of subsistence had been the sorry pay of an occasional reader for the press, as well as a contributor to the columns of a daily paper. He had parted with almost the whole of his slender stock of books, his watch, and all his clothes, except what he wore when he called on me. "Did you never try any of the magazines?" I inquired; "for they afford to young men of talent a fair livelihood." He said he had indeed struggled hard to gain a footing in one of the popular periodicals, but that his communications were invariably returned "with polite acknowledgments." One of these notes I saw, and have now in my possession. It was thus:—

"Mr M'—— begs to return the enclosed '*Remarks on English Versions of Euripides*,' with many thanks for the writer's polite offer of it to the E—— M——; but fears that, though an able performance, it is not exactly suited for the readers of the E—— M——.

"*To* Δ Δ."

A series of similar disappointments, and the consequent poverty and embarrassment into which he sank, had gradually undermined a constitution naturally feeble; and he told me, with much agitation, that had it not been for the trifling, but timely assistance of myself and family, he saw no means of escaping literal starvation! Could I help sympathising deeply with him? Alas! his misfortunes were very nearly paralleled by my own. While listening to his melancholy details, I seemed living over again the four first wretched years of my professional career.

* * * *

I must hasten, however, to the closing scene. I had left word with the nurse, that when Mr —— appeared dying, I should be instantly summoned. About five o'clock in the evening of the 6th July 18—, I received a message from Mr —— himself, saying that he wished to breathe his last in my presence, as the only friend he had on earth. Unavoidable and pressing professional engagements detained me until half-past six; and it was seven o'clock before I reached his bedside.

"Lord, Lord, doctor, poor Mr —— is dying sure!" exclaimed the woman of the house, as she opened the door. "Mrs Jones says he has been picking and clawing the bed-clothes awfully, so he must be dying!" * On entering the room, I found he had dropt asleep. The nurse told me he had been wandering a good deal in his mind. I asked what he had talked about? "*Larning*, doctor," she replied, "and a proud young lady." I sat down by his bedside. I saw the dews of death were stealing rapidly over him. His eyes, which were naturally very dark and piercing, were now far sunk into their sockets; his cheeks were hollow, and his hair matted with perspiration over his damp and pallid forehead. While I was gazing silently on the melancholy spectacle, and reflecting what great but undisciplined powers of mind were about soon to be disunited from the body, Mr —— opened his eyes, and, seeing me, said in a low, but clear and steady tone of voice—"Doctor—the last act of the tragedy." He gave me his hand. It was all he could do to lift it into mine. I could not speak; the tears were nearly gush-

* This very prevalent but absurd notion is not confined to the vulgar; and as I have, in the course of my practice, met with hundreds of respectable and intelligent people, who have held that a patient's "*picking and clawing the bed-clothes*" is a symptom of death, and who, consequently, view it with a kind of superstitious horror, I cannot refrain from explaining the philosophy of it in the simple and satisfactory words of Mr C. Bell:—†

"It is very common," he says, "to see the patient picking the bed-clothes, or catching at the empty air. This proceeds from an appearance of *motes* or *flies* passing before the eyes, and is occasioned by an affection of the retina, producing in it a sensation similar to that produced by the impression of images; and what is deficient in sensation, the *imagination supplies*: for although the resemblance betwixt those diseased affections of the retina, and the sensation conveyed to the brain may be very remote, yet, by that slight resemblance, the idea usually associated with the sensation will be excited in the mind."—BELL'S *Anatomy*, vol. iii. pp. 57, 58.

The secret lies in a disordered circulation of the blood, forcing the *red globules* into the minute vessels of the retina.

† Now Sir Charles Bell.

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ing forth. I felt as if I were gazing on my dying *son*.

"I have been dreaming, doctor, since you went," said he, "and what do you think about? I thought I had squared the circle, and was to perish for ever for my discovery."

"I hope, Mr ——," I replied, in a serious tone, and with something of displeasure in my manner—"I hope that, at this awful moment, you have more suitable and consolatory thoughts to occupy your mind with than those?" He sighed. "The clergyman you were so good as to send me," he said, after a pause, "was here this afternoon. He is a good man, I dare say, but weak, and has his head stuffed with the quibbles of the schools. He wanted to discuss the question of *free-will* with a dying man, doctor!"

"I hope he did not leave you without administering the ordinances of religion?" I inquired.

"He read me some of the church prayers, which were exquisitely touching and beautiful, and the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians, which is very sublime. He could not help giving me a rehearsal of what he was shortly to repeat over my grave!" exclaimed the dying man, with a melancholy smile. I felt some irritation at the light tone of his remarks, but concealed it.

"You received the sacrament, I hope, Mr ——?" He paused a few moments, and his brow was clouded. "No, doctor, to tell the truth, I declined it"——

"*Declined* the sacrament!" I exclaimed, with surprise.

"Yes—but dear doctor, I beg—I entreat you not to ask me about it any further," replied Mr —— gloomily, and lapsed into a fit of abstraction for some moments. Unnoticed by him, I despatched the nurse for another clergyman, an excellent and learned man, who was my intimate friend. I was gazing earnestly on Mr ——, as he lay with closed eyes; and was surprised to see the tears trickling from them.

"Mr ——, you have nothing, I hope, on your mind, to render your last moments unhappy?" I asked in a gentle tone.

"No—nothing material," he replied, with a deep sigh; continuing with his eyes closed, "I was only thinking what a bitter thing it is to be struck down so soon from among the bright throng of the living—to leave this fair, this beautiful world, after so short and sorrowful a sojourn. Oh, it *is* hard!" He shortly opened his eyes. His agitation had apparently passed away, and delirium was hovering over and disarranging his thoughts.

"Doctor, doctor, what a strange passage that is," said he suddenly, startling me with his altered voice, and the dreamy thoughtful expression of his eyes, "in the chorus of the *Medea*—

"Ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν χωροῦσι παγαὶ
καὶ δίκα καὶ πάντα πάλιν στρέφεται.*

Is not there something very mysterious and romantic about these lines? I could never exactly understand what was meant by them." Finding I continued silent—for I did not wish to encourage his indulging in a train of thought so foreign to his situation—he kept murmuring at intervals, metrically,

ἄνω ποταμῶν ἱερῶν,

in a most melancholy monotony. He then wandered on from one topic of classical literature to another, till he suddenly stopped short, and turning to me, said, "Doctor, I am raving very absurdly; I feel I am; but I cannot dismiss from my thoughts, even though I know I am dying, the subjects about which my mind has been occupied nearly all my life through. Oh!" changing the subject abruptly—"tell me, doctor, do those who die of my disorder generally continue in the possession of their intellects to the last?" I told him I thought they generally did.

"Then I shall burn brightly to the last! Thank God!—And yet," with a shudder, "it is shocking, too, to find one's-self gradually ceasing to exist.—Doctor, I shall recover.—I am sure I should if you were to bleed me," said he. His intellects were wandering.

The nurse now returned, and, to my

* Eurip. Med. 411-13.

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vexation, unaccompanied by Dr ——, who had gone that morning into the country. I did not send for any one else. His frame of mind was peculiar, and very unsatisfactory; but I thought it, on the whole, better not to disturb or irritate him by alluding to a subject he evidently disliked. I ordered candles to be brought, as it was now nearly nine o'clock. "Doctor," said the dying young man, in a feeble tone, "I think you will find a copy of Lactantius lying on my table. He has been a great favourite with me. May I trouble you to read me a passage—the eighth chapter of the seventh book—on the immortality of the soul? I should like to die thoroughly convinced of that noble truth—if truth it is—and I have often read that chapter with much satisfaction." I went to the table, and found the book—a pocket copy—the leaves of which were ready turned down to the very page I wanted. I therefore read to him, slowly and emphatically, the whole of the eighth and ninth chapters, beginning, "*Nam est igitur summum bonum immortalitas, ad quam capiendam, et formati a principio, et nati sumus.*" When I had got as far as the allusion to the vacillating view of Cicero, Mr —— repeated with me, sighing, the words, "*harum inquit sententiarum, quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis viderit.*"—As an instance of the

Ruling passion, strong in death,

I may mention, though somewhat to my own discredit, that he briskly corrected a false quantity which slipped from me. "Allow me, doctor—'*expĕtit*,' not '*expētit*.'" He made no other observation, when I had concluded reading the chapter from Lactantius, than, "I certainly wish I had early formed fixed principles on religious subjects—but it is now too late." He then dropped asleep, but presently began murmuring very sorrowfully—"Emma, Emma! haughty one! Not *one* look?—I am dying—and you don't know it—nor care for me! * * * How beautiful she looked stepping from the carriage! How magnificently dressed! I *think* she saw—*why* can't she love me! She cannot love somebody else—No—madness—no!" In this strain he continued soliloquising for some minutes longer. It was the first time I had ever heard anything of the kind fall from him. At length he asked, "I wonder if they ever came to her hands?" as if striving to recollect something. The nurse whispered that she had often heard him talk in the night-time about this lady, and that he would go on till he stopped in tears. I discovered, from a scrap or two found among his papers, after his decease, that the person he addressed as Emma, was a young lady in the higher circles of society, of considerable beauty, whom he first saw by accident, and fancied she had a regard for him. He had, in turn, indulged in the most extravagant and hopeless passion for her. He suspected himself, that she was wholly unconscious of being the object of his almost frenzied admiration. When he was asking "if something came to her hands," I have no doubt he alluded to some copy of verses he had sent to her, of which the following fragments, written in pencil, on a blank leaf of his Aristophanes, probably formed a part. There is some merit in them, but more extravagance.

I could go through the world with thee,
To spend with thee eternity!

* * * *

To see thy blue and passionate eye
Light on another scornfully,
But fix its melting glance on me,
And blend——

Read the poor heart that throbs for thee,
Imprint all o'er with thy dear name—
Yet withering 'neath a lonely flame,
That warms *thee* not, yet me consumes!

* * * *

Ay, I would have thee all my own,
Thy love, thy life, mine, *mine* alone;
See nothing in the world but me,
Since nought *I* know, or love, but thee!

The eyes that on a thousand fall,
I would collect their glances all,
And fling their lustre on my soul,
Till it imbibed, absorb'd the whole.

These are followed by several more lines; but the above will suffice. This insane attachment was exactly what I might have expected from one of his ardent and enthusiastic temperament. To return, however, once more. Towards eleven o'clock he began to fail

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rapidly. I had my fingers on his pulse, which beat very feebly, almost imperceptibly. He opened his eyes slowly, and gazed upwards with a vacant air.

"Why are you taking the candles away, nurse?" he inquired faintly. They had not been touched. His cold fingers gently compressed my hand—they were stiffening with death. "Don't, *don't* put the candles out, doctor," he commenced again, looking at me with an eye on which the thick mists and shadows of the grave were settling fast—they were filmy and glazed.

"Don't blow them out—don't—don't!" he again exclaimed, almost inaudibly.

"No, we will not! My dear Mr ——, both candles are burning brightly beside you on the table," I replied, tremulously—for I saw the senses were forgetting their functions—that life and consciousness were fast retiring!

"Well," he murmured almost inarticulately, "I am now quite in darkness! Oh, there is something at my heart—cold, cold! *Doctor, keep them off!** Why—O death!"—He ceased. He had spoken his last on earth. The intervals of respiration became gradually longer and longer; and the precise moment when he ceased to breathe at all could not be ascertained. Yes; it was all over. Poor Mr —— was dead. I shall never forget him.

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# CHAPTER V.

## PREPARING FOR THE HOUSE!

"Do, dear doctor, be so good as to drop in at —— Place, in the course of the morning, *by accident*—for I want you to see Mr ——. He has, I verily believe, bid adieu to his senses, for he is conducting himself very strangely. To tell you the truth, he is resolved on going down to the House this evening, for the purpose of speaking on the —— Bill, and will, I fear, act so absurdly as to make himself the laughing-stock of the whole country—at least I suspect as much, from what I have heard of his preparations. Ask to be shown up at once to Mr —— when you arrive, and gradually direct the conversation to politics—when you will soon see what is the matter. But mind, doctor, not a word of this note! Your visit will be quite *accidental*, you know. Believe me, my dear doctor, yours," &c. &c. Such was the note put into my hands by a servant, as my carriage was driving off on my first morning round. I knew Mrs ——, the fair writer of it, very intimately—as, indeed, the familiar and confidential strain of her note will suffice to show. She was a very

* I once before heard these strange words fall from the lips of a dying patient—a lady. To me they suggest very unpleasant, I may say fearful thoughts. *What* is to be kept off?

[This note has called forth an angry commentary from the able editor of the *Spectator* newspaper, who heads the paragraph of which I complain, with the words—"*Injudicious Sanction of Superstitious Terrors.*" I feel satisfied that the writer, on a reconsideration of what he has there expressed, will be disposed to withdraw his censures. True—a dying man may often utter "unintelligible gibberish;" but if we find *several* dying persons, of *different* characters and situations, concur in uttering, in their last moments, *the same words*—is it so unwarrantable for an observer to hazard an *inquiry* concerning their possible import? There is a lecture of Sir Henry Halford, lately published, which contains some highly pertinent and interesting observations on the subject. I beg to refer the reader to it.]

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amiable and clever woman, and would not have complained, I was sure, without reason. Wishing, therefore, to oblige her, by a prompt attention to her request, and in the full expectation, from what I knew of the worthy member's eccentricities, of encountering some singular scene, I directed the horses' heads to be turned towards —— Place. I reached the house about twelve o'clock, and went up-stairs at once to the drawing-room, where I understood Mr —— had taken up quarters for the day. The servant opened the door and announced me.

"Oh! show Dr —— in." I entered. The object of my visit, I may just say, was the very *beau ideal* of a county member; somewhat inclined to corpulency, with a fine, fresh, rubicund, good-natured face, and that bluff old English frankness of manner, which flings you back into the age of Sir Roger de Coverly. He was dressed in a long, grey, woollen morning-gown; and, with his hands crammed into the hind pockets, was pacing rapidly to and fro from one end of the spacious room to the other. At one extremity was a table, on which lay a sheet of foolscap, closely written, and crumpled as if with constant handling, his gold repeater, and a half-emptied decanter of sherry, with a wine-glass. A glance at all these paraphernalia convinced me of the nature of Mr ——'s occupation; he was committing his *speech* to memory!

"How d'ye do, how d'ye do, doctor?" he exclaimed, in a hearty but hurried tone; "you must not keep me long: busy—very busy indeed, doctor." I had looked in by accident, I told him, and did not intend to detain him an instant. I remarked that I supposed he was busy preparing for the House.

"Ah, right, doctor—right! Ay, by ——! and a grand hit it will be, too!—I shall peg it into them to-night, doctor! I'll let them know what an English county member is! I'll make the House too hot to hold them!" said Mr ——, walking to and fro, at an accelerated pace. He was evidently boiling over with excitement.

"You are going to speak to-night, then, on the great —— question, I suppose?" said I, hardly able to repress a smile.

"Speak, doctor? I'll burst on them with such a view-halloo as shall startle the whole pack! *I'll* show my Lord ——what kind of stuff I'm made of—I will, by ——! He was pleased to tell the House, the other evening—curse his impudence!—that the two members for ———shire were a mere couple of dumb-bells—he did, by ——! But *I'll* show him whether or not *I*, for one of them, am to be jeered and flammed with impunity! Ha! doctor, what d'ye think of this?" said he, hurrying to the table, and taking up the manuscript I have mentioned. He was going to read it to me, but suddenly stopped short, and laid it down again on the table, exclaiming, "Nay, I must know it off by this time—so listen! have at ye, doctor!"

After a pompous hem! hem! he commenced, and with infinite energy and boisterousness of manner recited the whole oration. It was certainly a wonderful—a matchless performance—parcelled out with a rigid adherence to the rules of ancient rhetoric. As he proceeded, he recited such astounding absurdities — such preposterous Bombastes-Furioso declamations—as, had they been uttered in the House, would assuredly have procured the triumphant speaker six or seven rounds of convulsive laughter! Had I not known well the simplicity and sincerity — the perfect *bonhomie* — of Mr ——, I should have supposed he was hoaxing me; but I assuredly suspected he was *himself* the hoaxed party—the joking-post of some witty wag, who had determined to afford the House a night's sport at poor Mr ——'s expense! Indeed, I never in my life listened to such pitifully puerile—such almost idiotic *gallimatia*. I felt certain it could never have been the composition of fox-hunting Mr ——! There was a hackneyed quotation from Horace—from the Septuagint (!), and from Locke; and then a scampering through the whole flowery realms of rhetorical ornament—and a glancing at every topic of foreign or domestic policy that

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could conceivably attract the attention of the most erratic fancy. In short, there surely never before was such a speech composed since the world began! And this was the sort of thing that poor Mr —— actually intended to deliver that memorable evening in the House of Commons! As for myself, I could not control my risible faculties; but accompanied the peroration with a perfect shout of laughter! Mr —— laid down the paper (which he had twisted into a sort of scroll) in an ecstasy, and joined me in full chorus, slapping me on the shoulder, and exclaiming—"Ah! d—— it! doctor, I *knew* you would like it! It's just the thing—isn't it? There will be no standing me at the next election for ———shire, if I can only deliver all this in the House to-night! Old Turnpenny, that's going to start against me, backed by the manufacturing interest, won't come up—and you see if he does!—Curse it! I thought it was *in* me, and would come *out* some of these days. They shall have it all to-night—they shall, by ——! Only be on the look-out for the morning papers, doctor—that's all!" and he set off, walking rapidly, with long strides, from one end of the room to the other. I began to be apprehensive that there was too much ground for Mrs ——'s suspicions, that he had literally "taken leave of his senses." Recollecting, at length, the object of my visit, which the amusing exhibition I have been attempting to describe had almost driven from my memory, I endeavoured to think, on the spur of the moment, of some scheme for diverting him from his purpose, and preventing the lamentable exposure he was preparing for himself. I could think of nothing else than attacking him on the sore point—one on which he had been hipped for years, and not without reason—a hereditary tendency to apoplexy.

"But, my dear sir," said I, "this excitement will destroy you—you will bring on a fit of apoplexy, if you go on for an hour longer in this way—you will indeed!" He stood still, changed colour a little, and stammered, "What! eh, d—— it!—apoplexy!—you don't say so, doctor? Hem! how is my pulse?" extending his wrist. I felt it—looked at my watch, and shook my head.

"Eh — what, doctor! *Newmarket*, eh?" said he, with an alarmed air—meaning to ask me whether his pulse was beating rapidly.

"It is, indeed, Mr ——. It beats upwards of one hundred and fifteen a minute," I replied, still keeping my fingers at his wrist, and my eyes riveted on my watch—for I dared not trust myself with looking in his countenance. He started from me without uttering a syllable; hurried to the table, poured out a glass of wine, and gulped it down instantly. I suppose he caught an unfortunate smile or a smirk on my face, for he came up to me, and in a coaxing but disturbed manner, said—"Now, come, come, doctor—doctor, no humbug! I feel well enough all over! D—— it, I *will* speak in the House to-night, come what may, that's flat! Why, there'll be a general election in a few months, and it's of consequence for me to DO something—to make a figure in the House. Besides, it is a great constitutional"——

"Well, well, Mr ——, undoubtedly you must please yourself," said I seriously; "but if a fit *should*—you'll remember I did my duty, and warned you how to avert it!"—"Hem, ahem!" he ejaculated, with a somewhat puzzled air. I thought I had succeeded in shaking his purpose. I was, however, too sanguine in my expectations. "I must bid you good-morning, doctor," said he abruptly, "I *must* speak! I *will* try it to-night, at all events;—but I'll be calm—I will! And if I *should* die—but—devil take it—that's *impossible*, you know! But if I should—why, it will be a martyr's death; I shall die a patriot—ha, ha, ha! Good-morning, doctor!" He led me to the door, laughing as he went, but not so heartily or boisterously as formerly. I was hurrying down stairs when Mr —— reopened the drawing-room door, and called out, "Doctor, doctor, just be so



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good as to look in on my good lady before you go. She's somewhere about the house—in her *boudoir*, I dare say. She's not quite well this morning—a fit of the vapours—hem! You understand me, doctor?" putting his finger to the side of his nose with a wise air. I could not help smiling at the reciprocal anxiety for each other's health simultaneously manifested by this worthy couple.

"Well, doctor, am not I right?" exclaimed Mrs —— in a low tone, opening the dining-room door, and beckoning me in.

"Yes, indeed, madam. My interview was little else than a running commentary on your note to me."

"How did you find him engaged, Doctor?—Learning his *speech*, as he calls it—eh?" inquired the lady, with a chagrined air, which was heightened when I recounted what had passed upstairs.

"Oh, absurd! monstrous! Doctor, I am ready to expire with vexation to see Mr —— acting so foolishly!—'Tis all owing to that odious Dr ——, our village rector, who is up in town now, and an immense crony of Mr ——'s. I suspected there was something brewing between them; for they have been laying their wise heads together for a week past. Did not he repeat *the speech* to you, doctor?—the whole of it?"

"Yes, indeed, madam, he did," I replied, smiling at the recollection.

"Ah—hideous rant it was, I dare say!—I'll tell you a secret, doctor. I know it was every word composed by that abominable old addlehead Dr ——, a doodle that he is!—(I wonder what brought him up from his parish!)—And it is he that has inflamed Mr ——'s fancy with making '*a great hit*' in the House, as they call it. That precious piece of stuff which they call a speech, poor Mr —— has been learning for this week past; and has several times woke me in the night with ranting snatches of it."

I begged Mrs —— not to take it so seriously.

"Now, tell me candidly, Dr ——, did you ever hear such horrible nonsense in your life? It is all that country parson's trash, collected by bits out of his old stupid sermons! I'm sure our name will run the gauntlet of all the papers in England, for a fortnight to come!"

I said, I was sorry to be compelled to acquiesce in the truth of what she was saying.

"Really," she continued, pressing her hand to her forehead, "I feel quite poorly myself with agitation at the thought of to-night's farce. Did you attempt to dissuade him? You might have frightened him with a hint or two about his tendency to apoplexy, you know."

"I did my utmost, madam, I assure you; and certainly startled him not a little. But, alas! he rallied, and good-humouredly sent me from the room, telling me, that, if the effort of speaking killed him, he should share the fate of Lord Chatham, or something of that sort."

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Mrs ——, almost shedding tears with vexation. "But *entre nous*, doctor, could you not think of anything—hem!—something in the medical way—to prevent his going to the House to-night?—A—a sleeping draught—eh, doctor?"

"Really, my dear madam," said I seriously, "I should not feel justified in going so far as that."

"O, dear, dear doctor, what possible harm can there be in it? Do consent to my wishes for once, and I shall be eternally obliged to you. *Do* order a simple sleeping-draught — strong enough to keep him in bed till five or six o'clock in the morning—and I will myself slip it into his wine at dinner."

In short, there was no resisting the importunities and distress of so fine a woman as Mrs ——; so I ordered about five-and-thirty drops of laudanum, in a little syrup and water. But, alas! this scheme was frustrated by Mr ——'s, two hours afterwards, unexpectedly ordering the carriage (while Mrs —— was herself gone to procure his *quietus*), and leaving word he should dine with some members that evening at Brookes'. After all, however,

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a lucky accident accomplished Mrs ——'s wishes, though it deprived her husband of that opportunity of seizing the laurels of parliamentary eloquence; for the ministry, finding the measure, against which Mr —— had intended to level his oration, to be extremely unpopular, and anticipating that they should be dead beat, wisely postponed it *sine die*.

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# CHAPTER VI.

## DUELLING.*

I HAD been invited by young Lord ——, the nobleman mentioned in my first chapter, to spend the latter part of my last college vacation with his lordship at his shooting-box † in ———shire. As his destined profession was the army, he had already a tolerably numerous retinue of military friends, several of whom were engaged to join us on our arrival at ——; so that we anticipated a very gay and jovial season. Our expectations were not disappointed. What with shooting, fishing, and riding abroad—billiards, songs, and high *feeding* at home—our days and nights glided as merrily away as fun and frolic could make them. One of the many schemes of amusement devised by our party was giving a sort of military subscription-ball at the small town of ——, from which we were distant not more than four or five miles. All my Lord ——'s party, of course, were to be there, as well as several others of his friends, scattered at a little distance from him in the country. On the appointed day all went off admirably. The little town of —— absolutely reeled beneath the unusual excitement of music, dancing, and universal fêting. It was, in short, a sort of miniature carnival, which the inhabitants, for several reasons, but more especially the melancholy one I am going to mention, have not yet forgotten. It is not very wonderful that all the rustic beauty of the place was collected together. Many a village belle was there, in truth panting and fluttering with delighted agitation at the unusual attentions of their handsome and agreeable partners; for there was not a young military member of our party but merited the epithets. As for myself, being cursed—as I once before hinted—with a very insignificant person, and not the most attractive or communicative manners; being utterly incapable of pouring that soft, delicious nonsense—that fascinating, searching small-talk, which has stolen so often right through a lady's ear,

* The melancholy facts on which the ensuing narrative is founded, I find entered in the Diary as far back as nearly twenty-five years ago; and I am convinced, after some little inquiry, that there is no one now living whose feelings could be shocked by its perusal.

† — "résidences temporaires, nommées *shooting-boxes*," says the French Translator, adding in a note, "*Loges-de-Chasse;* rendez-vous de chasse." I cannot resist transcribing part of the French *text*, in which I am made to talk thus:—"Shooting-boxes sont le rendezvous ordinaire de gens de bon ton, que la vie monotone de leurs tourelles gothiques, et la vie brillante de Londres, ont fatigués, pendante l'*été*, et pendant l'hiver C'est là que les gouts de la jeune noblesse Anglaise se developpent avec le plus d'énergie. Lord Byron, dans Newstead Abbey, fut un exemple remarquable de ce genre d'existence pugilistique, chasseresse, libertine, buveuse, assurément fort plus morale, opposée a la délicatesse des mœurs, mais vive, amusante, entrainante, étourdinante, et où la morgue aristocratique, se dépouillant enfin de ses privilèges et de ses ridicules, rentre dans toute l'independance sauvage, et ne se distingue de la roture que par l'extrême véhémence des excès qui l'entrainent."

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into the very centre of her heart; being no adept, I say, at this, I contented myself with dancing a set or two with a young woman whom nobody else seemed inclined to lead out, and continued for the rest of the evening, more a *spectator* than a partaker of the gaieties of the scene. There was one girl there—the daughter of a reputable retired tradesman—of singular beauty, and known in the neighbourhood by the name of "*The Blue Bell of* ——."* Of course she was the object of universal admiration, and literally besieged the whole evening with applications for the "honour of her hand." I do not exaggerate when I say that, in my opinion, this young woman was perfectly beautiful. Her complexion was of dazzling purity and transparence—her symmetrical features of a placid bust-like character, which, however, would perhaps have been considered insipid, had it not been for a brilliant pair of large languishing blue eyes, resembling

——— blue water-lilies, when the breeze
Maketh the crystal waters round them tremble,

which it was almost madness to look upon. And then her light auburn hair, which hung in loose and easy curls on each cheek, like soft golden clouds flitting past the moon! Her figure was in keeping with her countenance—slender, graceful, and delicate, with a most exquisitely-turned foot and ankle. I have spent so many words about her description, because I have never since seen any woman that I thought equalled her; and because her beauty occasioned the wretched catastrophe I am about to relate.

She riveted the attention of all our party, except my young host, Lord ——, who adhered all the evening to a sweet creature he had selected on first entering the room. I observed, however, one of our party—a dashing young captain in the Guards, highly connected, and of handsome and prepossessing person and manners—and a gentleman of nearly equal personal pretensions, who had been invited from —— Hall, his father's seat—to exceed every one present in their attentions to sweet Mary ——; and, as she occasionally smiled on one or the other of the rivals, I saw the countenance of either alternately clouded with displeasure. Captain —— was soliciting her hand for the last set—a country dance—when his rival (whom, for distinction's sake, I shall call *Trevor*, though that of course is very far from his real name), stepping up to her, seized her hand, and said, in rather a quick and sharp tone, "Captain ——, she has promised me the last set; I beg therefore you will resign her. I am right, Miss ——?" he inquired of the girl, who blushingly replied, "I think I did promise, Mr Trevor—but I would dance with both, if I could. Captain, you are not angry with me—are you?" she smiled appealingly.

"Certainly not, madam," he replied with a peculiar emphasis; and after directing an eye, which kindled like a star, to his more successful rival, retired haughtily a few paces, and soon afterwards left the room. A strong conviction seized me, that even this small and trifling incident would be attended with mischief between those two fierce and undisciplined spirits; for I occasionally saw Mr Trevor turn a moment from his beautiful partner, and cast a stern inquiring glance round the room, as if in search of Captain ——. I saw he had noticed the haughty frown with which the captain had retired.

Most of the gentlemen who had accompanied Lord —— to this ball, were engaged to dine with him the next Sunday evening. Mr Trevor and the captain (who, I think I mentioned, was staying a few days with his lordship) would meet at this party; and I determined to watch their demeanour. Captain —— was at the window, when Mr Trevor, on horseback, attended by his groom, alighted at the door; and, on seeing who it was, walked away to another part of the room, with an air of assumed indifference; but I caught his quick and restless glance involuntarily directed towards the door

* Surnommée, la Violette *de Hazledon!*"—*French Translator.*

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through which Mr Trevor would enter. They saluted each other with civility—rather coldly, I thought—but there was nothing particularly marked in the manner of either. About twenty sat down to dinner. All promised to go off well—for the cooking was admirable, the wines first-rate, and the conversation brisk and various. Captain —— and Mr Trevor were seated at some distance from each other—the former being my next neighbour. The cloth was not removed till a few minutes after eight, when the dessert, with a fresh and large supply of wine, was introduced. The late ball, of course, was a prominent topic of conversation; and after a few of the usual bachelor toasts had been drunk with noisy enthusiasm, and we all felt the elevating influence of the wine we had been drinking, Lord —— motioned silence, and said, "Now, my dear fellows, I have a toast in my eye that will delight you all—so, bumpers, gentlemen—bumpers!—up to the very brim and over—to make *sure* your glasses are full—while I propose to you the health of a beautiful—nay, by ——! the most beautiful girl we have any of us seen for this year. Ha! I see all anticipate me—so, to be short, here is the health of Mary ——, the Blue Bell of ——!" It was drunk with acclamation. I thought I perceived Captain ——'s hand, however, shake a little, as he lifted his glass to his mouth. "Who is to return thanks for her?"—"The chosen one, to be sure!"—"Who is he?"—"Legs—rise—legs—whoever he is!" was shouted, asked, and answered in a breath. "Oh! Trevor is the happy swain—there's no doubt of that—he monopolised her all the evening—*I* could not get her hand once!" exclaimed one near Mr Trevor. "Nor I,"—"Nor I"—echoed several. Mr Trevor looked with a delighted and triumphant air round the room, and seemed about to rise, but there was a cry—"No!—Trevor is not the man—*I* say Captain —— is the favourite!"—"Ay, ten to one on the Captain!" roared a young hero of Ascot. "Stuff—stuff!" muttered the Captain, hurriedly cutting an apple to fritters, and now and then casting a fierce glance towards Mr Trevor. There were many noisy maintainers of both Trevor and the Captain.

"Come, come, gentlemen," said a young Cornish baronet good-humouredly, seeing the two young men appeared to view the affair very seriously, "the best way, since I dare be sworn the girl herself does not know which she likes best, will be to *toss up* who shall be given the credit of her beau!" A loud laugh followed this droll proposal; in which all joined except Trevor and the Captain. The latter had poured out some claret while Sir —— was speaking, and sipped it with an air of assumed carelessness. I observed, however, that he never removed his eye from his glass; and that his face was pale, as if from some strong internal emotion. Mr Trevor's demeanour, however, also indicated considerable embarrassment; but he was older than the Captain, and had much more command of manner. I was amazed, for my own part, to see them take up such an insignificant affair so seriously; but these things generally involve so much of the strong passions of our youthful nature, especially our vanity and jealousy, that, on second thoughts, my surprise abated.

"I certainly fancied you were the favourite, Captain; for I saw her blush with satisfaction when you squeezed her hand," I whispered. "You are right, ——," he answered, with a forced smile. "I don't think Trevor can have any pretensions to her favour." The noisiness of the party was now subsiding, and, nobody knew why, an air of blank embarrassment seemed to pervade all present.

"Upon my honour, gentlemen, this is a vastly silly affair altogether, and quite unworthy such a stir as it has excited," said Mr Trevor; "but as so much notice *has* been taken of it, I cannot help saying, though it is childishly absurd perhaps, that I think the beautiful 'Blue Bell of ——' is mine—mine alone! I believe I have good ground for saying I am the sole winner of the prize, and have distanced my military competitor," continued Mr

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Trevor, turning to Captain —— with a smiling air, which was very foreign to his real feelings, though his bright eyes—his debonair demeanour—that fascinating *je ne sais quoi* of his——

"Trevor! don't be insolent!" exclaimed the Captain sternly, reddening with passion.

"*Insolent!* Captain?" inquired Trevor, with an amazed air—"What the deuce do you mean? I'm sure you don't want to quarrel with me—oh, it's impossible! If I have said what was offensive, by ——, I did not mean it: and, as we said at Rugby, *indictum puta*—and there's an end of it. But as for my sweet little Blue Bell, I know—am perfectly certain—ay, spite of the Captain's dark looks—that I am the happy man. So, gentlemen, *de jure* and *de facto*—for her I return you thanks." He sat down. There was so much kindness in his manner, and he had so handsomely disavowed any intentions of hurting Captain ——'s feelings, that I hoped the young Hotspur beside me was quieted. Not so, however.

"Trevor," said he, in a hurried tone, "you are mistaken—you are, by ——! You don't know what passed between Mary —— and myself that evening. On my word and honour, she told me she wished she could be off her engagement with you."

"Nonsense! nonsense! She must have said it to amuse you, Captain—she *could* have had no other intention. The very next morning she told me"——

"The very next morning!" shouted Captain ——, "why, what the —— could you have wanted with Mary —— the next morning?"

"That is my affair, Captain—not yours. And since you *will* have it out, I tell you for your consolation, that Mary and I have met every day since!" said Mr Trevor loudly—even vehemently. He was getting a little *flustered*, as the phrase is, with wine, which he was pouring down glass after glass, else, of course, he could never have made such an absurd—such an unusual disclosure.

"Trevor, I must say you act very meanly in telling us—if it really is so," said the Captain, with an intensely chagrined and mortified air; "and if you intend to ruin that sweet and innocent creature, I shall take leave to say, that you are a—a—a—curse on it, it WILL out—a villain!" continued the Captain, slowly and deliberately. My heart flew up to my throat, where it fluttered as though it would have choked me. There was an instant and dead silence.

"A *villain*—did you say, Captain? and accuse me of meanness?" inquired Mr Trevor coolly, while the colour suddenly faded from his darkening features; and, rising from his chair, he stepped forward, and stood nearly opposite to the Captain, with his half-emptied glass in his hand, which, however, was not observed by him he addressed. "Yes, sir, I *did* say so," replied the Captain firmly—"and what then?"

"Then, of course, you will see the necessity of apologising for it instantly," rejoined Mr Trevor.

"As I am not in the habit, Mr Trevor, of saying what requires an apology, I have none to offer," said Captain ——, drawing himself up in his chair, and eyeing Mr Trevor with a steady look of haughty composure.

"Then, Captain, don't expect me to apologise for *this!*" thundered Mr Trevor, at the same time hurling his glass, wine and all, at the Captain's head. Part of the wine fell on me, but the glass glanced at the ear of Captain ——, and cut it slightly; for he had started aside on seeing Mr Trevor's intention. A mist seemed to cover my eyes, as I saw every one present rising from his chair. The room was, of course, in an uproar. The two who had quarrelled were the only calm persons present. Mr Trevor remained standing on the same spot, with his arms folded on his breast; while Captain —— calmly wiped off the stains of wine from his shirt-ruffles and white waistcoat, walked up to Lord ——, who was at but a yard or two's distance, and inquired, in a low tone of voice, "Your lordship has pistols here, of course? We had better settle this

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little matter now, and here. Captain V——, you will kindly do what is necessary for me?"

"My dear fellow, be calm! This is really a very absurd quarrel—likely to be a dreadful business though!" replied his lordship, with great agitation.

"Come, shake hands and be friends! Come, don't let a trumpery dinner brawl lead to bloodshed—and in my house, too! Make it up like men of sense"——

"That, your lordship of course knows as well as I do, is impossible. Will you, Captain V——, be good enough to bring the pistols? You will find them in his lordship's shooting-gallery—we had better adjourn there, by the way, eh?" inquired the Captain coolly—He had seen many of these *affairs!*

"Then, bring them—bring them, by all means."

"In God's name, let this quarrel be settled on the spot!" exclaimed ——, and ——, and ——.

"We all know they *must* fight—that's as clear as the sun—so the sooner the better!" exclaimed the Honourable Mr ——, a hot-headed cousin of Lord ——'s.

"Eternal curses on the silly slut!" groaned his lordship; "here will be bloodshed for her! My dear Trevor!" said he, hurrying to that gentleman, who, with seven or eight people round him, was conversing on the affair with perfect composure; "do, I implore—I beg—I supplicate, that you would leave my house! Oh, don't let it be said I ask people here to kill one another! Why may not this wretched business be made up?—By ——, it *shall* be," said he vehemently; and, putting his arm into that of Mr Trevor, he endeavoured to draw him towards the spot where Captain —— was standing.

"Your lordship is very good, but it's useless," replied Mr Trevor, struggling to disengage his arm from that of Lord ——. "Your lordship knows the business *must* be settled, and the sooner the better. My friend Sir —— has undertaken to do what is correct on the occasion. Come," addressing the young baronet, "come away, and join Captain V——." All this was uttered with *real* nonchalance! Somebody present told him that the Captain was one of the best shots in England—could hit a sixpence at ten yards' distance. "Can he, by ——?" said he with a smile, without evincing the slightest symptoms of trepidation. "Why, then, I may as well make my will, for I'm as blind as a mole!—Ha! I have it." He walked out from among those who were standing round him, and strode up to Captain ——, who was conversing earnestly with one or two of his brother officers.

"Captain ——," said Mr Trevor sternly, extending his right hand, with his glove half drawn on; the Captain turned suddenly towards him with a furious scowl—"I am told you are a dead shot—eh?"

"Well, sir, and what of that?" inquired the Captain haughtily, and with some curiosity in his countenance.

"You know I am short-sighted—blind as a beetle—and not very well versed in shooting matters"——Every one present started, and looked with surprise and displeasure at the speaker; and one muttered in my ear—"Eh?—d——!—Trevor showing the white feather? I *am* astonished!"

"Why, what *can* you mean by all this, sir?" inquired the Captain, with a contemptuous sneer.

"Oh! merely that we ought not to fight on unequal terms. Do you think, my good sir, I will stand to be shot at without having a chance of returning the favour? I have to say therefore, merely, that since this quarrel is of your own seeking—and your own infernal folly only has brought it about—I shall insist on our fighting breast to breast—muzzle to muzzle—and across a table. Yes," he continued, elevating his voice to nearly a shout, "we will go down to hell together—if we go at all—that is *some* consolation."

"Infamous!"—"Monstrous!" was echoed from all present. They would not, they said, hear of such a thing—they would not stand to see such butchery! Eight or ten left the room

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abruptly, and did not return. Captain —— made no reply to Trevor's proposal, but was conversing anxiously with his friends.

"*Now*, sir, who is the coward?" inquired Mr Trevor sarcastically.

"A few moments will show," replied the Captain, stepping forward with no sign of agitation except a countenance of an ashy hue; "for I accede to your terms—ruffianly—murderous as they are; and may the curse of a ruined house overwhelm you and your family for ever!" faltered Captain ——, who saw, of course, that certain death was before both.

"Are the pistols preparing?" inquired Mr Trevor, without regarding the exclamation of Captain ——. He was answered in the affirmative, that Captain V—— and Sir —— were both absent on that errand. It was agreed that the dreadful affair should take place in the shooting-gallery, where their noise would be less likely to alarm the servants. It is hardly necessary to repeat the exclamations of "Murder!—downright, savage, deliberate murder!" which burst from all around. Two gentlemen left abruptly, saddled their horses, and galloped after peace-officers; while Lord ——, who was almost distracted, hurried, accompanied by several gentlemen and myself, to the shooting-gallery, leaving the Captain and a friend in the dining-room, while Mr Trevor, with another, betook themselves to the shrubbery walk. His lordship informed Captain V—— and the Baronet of the dreadful nature of the combat that had been determined on since they had left the room. They both threw down the pistols they were in the act of loading, and, horror-struck, swore they would have no concern whatever in such a barbarous and bloody transaction. A sudden suggestion of Lord ——'s, however, was adopted. They agreed, after much hesitation and doubt as to the success of the project, to charge the pistols with powder only, and put them into the hands of the Captain and Mr Trevor, as though they were loaded with ball. Lord —— was sanguine enough to suppose that, when they had both stood fire, and indisputably proved their courage, the affair might be settled amicably. As soon as the necessary preparations were completed, and two dreary lights were placed in the shooting-gallery, both the hostile parties were summoned. As it was well known that I was preparing for the medical profession, my services were put into requisition for both.

"But have you any instruments or bandages?" inquired some one.

"It is of little consequence—we are not likely to want them, I think, if our pistols do their duty," said Mr Trevor, with a smile that to me seemed ghastly.

But a servant was mounted on the fleetest horse in Lord ——'s stable, and despatched for the surgeon, who resided at not more than half a mile's distance, with a note requesting him to come furnished with the necessary instruments for a gunshot wound. As the principals were impatient, and the seconds, as well as the others present, were in the secret of the blank charge in the pistols, and anticipated nothing like bloodshed, the pistols were placed in the hands of each in dead silence, and the two parties, with their respective friends, retired to a little distance from each other.

"Are you prepared, Mr Trevor?" inquired one of Captain ——'s party; and, being answered in the affirmative, in a moment after, the two principals, pistol in hand, approached one another. Though I was almost blinded with agitation, and was, in common with those around, quaking for the success of our scheme, my eyes were riveted on their every movement. There was something fearfully impressive in their demeanour. Though stepping to certain death, as they supposed, there was not the slightest symptom of terror or agitation visible—no swaggering—no affectation of a calmness they did not feel. The countenance of each was deadly pale and damp; but not a muscle trembled.

"Who is to give us the word?" asked the Captain in a whisper, which, though low, was heard all over the

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room; "for, in this sort of affair, if one fires a second before the other, he is a murderer." At that moment there was a noise heard; it was the surgeon who had arrived, and now entered breathless. "Step out, and give the word at once," said Mr Trevor impatiently. Both the Captain and Mr Trevor returned and shook hands, with a melancholy smile, with their friends, and then retook their places. The gentleman who was to give the signal then stepped towards them, and, closing his eyes with his hands, said, in a tremulous tone, "Raise your pistols!" —the muzzles were instantly touching one another's breasts—"and when I have counted three, fire. One—two —three!"—They fired—both recoiled with the shock several paces, and their friends rushed forward.

"Why, what is the meaning of this!" exclaimed both in a breath. "Who has dared to mock us in this way? There were no balls in the pistols!" exclaimed Trevor fiercely. Lord —— and the seconds explained the well-meant artifice, and received an indignant curse for their pains. It was in vain we all implored them to be reconciled, as each had done amply sufficient to vindicate his honour. Trevor almost gnashed his teeth with fury. There was something fiendish, I thought, in the expression of his countenance. "It is easily remedied," said Captain ——, as his eye caught several small swords hanging up. He took down two, measured them, and proffered one to his antagonist, who clutched it eagerly.—"There *can* be no deception here, however," he gasped; "and now"—each put himself into posture—"stand off there!"

We fell back, horror-struck at the relentless and revengeful spirit with which they seemed animated. I do not know which was the better swordsman; I recollect only seeing a rapid glancing of their weapons flashing about like sparks of fire, and a hurrying about in all directions, which lasted for several moments, when one of them fell. It was the Captain; for the strong and skilful arm of Mr Trevor had thrust his sword nearly up to the hilt in the side of his antagonist. His very heart was cloven! The unfortunate young man fell without uttering a groan—his sword dropped from his grasp—he pressed his right hand to his heart, and, with a quivering motion of the lips, as though struggling to speak, expired! "O, my great God!" exclaimed Trevor, in a broken and hollow tone, with a face so blanched and horror-stricken that it froze my very blood to look upon, "what have I done? *Can all this be* REAL!" He continued on his knees by the side of his fallen antagonist, with his hands clasped convulsively, and his eyes glaring upwards, for several moments.

* * * *

A haze of horror is spread over that black transaction; and if it is dissipated for an instant, when my mind's eye suddenly looks back through the vista of years, the scene seems only the gloomy representation or picture of some occurrence which I cannot persuade myself that I *actually witnessed*. To this hour, when I advert to it, I am not free from fits of incredulousness. The affair created a great ferment at the time. The unhappy survivor (who, in this narrative, has passed under the name of Trevor) instantly left England, and died, about five years afterwards, in the south of France, in truth broken-hearted.—In a word, since that day I have never seen men entering into discussion, when warmed with wine, and approaching, never so slowly, towards the confines of personality, without reverting, with a shudder, to the trifling—the utterly insignificant —circumstances, which wine and the hot passions of youth kindled into the fatal brawl which cost poor Captain ——his life, and drove Mr —— abroad, to die a broken-hearted exile!

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# CHAPTER VII.

## INTRIGUING AND MADNESS.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR OF BLACKWOOD.* —Sir Christopher,—A letter, under the title of "*Blackwood's Magazine* v. *the Secrets of the Medical Profession*," appeared in the *Lancet* of the 28th August last—"the most influential and popular organ," it says, "the profession possesses"—a paragraph from which I beg to extract, and call the attention of your numerous readers to it. I do this in justice to myself; because, in the event of my name, insignificant perhaps as it is, happening to be disclosed, the said letter is calculated to work me much prejudice with my professional brethren, and also with the public in general; for I need not tell you, Sir Christopher, of the extensive and miscellaneous circulation of the publication alluded to. After some complimentary remarks, the writer proceeds:—

"But I enter my protest, as a physician in some little practice, against the *custom of disclosing to the public the sacred secrets which are communicated to us in perfect confidence by our patients, and ought to be preserved inviolable.* The Editor of Blackwood happily enough says, 'what periodical has *sunk a shaft* into this rich mine of incident and sentiment?' True; the reason has been, and is yet, I hope, to be found in the *honour* of our profession, and the determination of its members to *merit* the confidence of their patients, by continuing, in the language of Junius, 'the sole depositary of their secrets, which shall perish with them.' If the writer of the papers in question, or the Editor of Blackwood, should see this letter, they are *implored* to consider its purport, and thus prevent the public from viewing their medical attendants with *distrust*, and withholding those confidential disclosures which are essential to the due performance of our professional duties. The very persons who would read such a series of articles as the 'Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician' promise to be, with intense interest, would be the first to act on the principle I have mentioned."

If I were not credibly assured, Sir Christopher, that this letter is the production of a distinguished member of the profession, I should have felt inclined to compress my commentary on it into one emphatic little word—*humbug!* As it is, however, I beg to ask the writer, who is so ready at starting the grave charge of a breach of professional confidence, what I do more, in publishing in your Magazine these papers of my late friend, with the most scrupulous concealment of everything which could possibly lead to undue disclosures, than is constantly done in the pages of the *Lancet* itself, as well as all the other professional journals, text-books, and treatises, which almost invariably append *real initials*—(I appeal to every medical man whether such is not the fact)—and other *indicia*, to the most painful, and, in many instances, revolting and offensive details? It may possibly be answered—as it really has been—that, in the latter case, the narratives meet only *professional eyes*. What! in the *Lancet?* in the *Medical Gazette?* in *Dr Reece's Journal?* Are these works to

* As considerable currency has been given to the objections which called forth this answer, I have retained it as a sort of standing defence.

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be found in the hands of professional men only?—I have but one other observation to make. Would the delicacy of patients be less shocked at finding the peculiar features of their physical maladies—a subject on which their feelings are morbidly irritable—exposed to every member, high and low, young and old, of our extensive profession—the theme of lectures—the subject of constant allusion and comment, from beneath the thin veil of "Mrs J—— M——t," &c.; is this, I say, less likely to hurt their feelings, than seeing (as is improbable in nine cases out of ten of those who read these *Passages*) the *morale*, the *sentiment* of their case extracted, dressed in the shape of simple narrative, and challenging the sympathy and admiration of the public? Take, as an instance, the first narrative, entitled "*Cancer*," which appeared in your last Magazine. Could Mrs St——, were she living, be pained at reading it—or any surviving friend or relative, for her? And if any subsequent sketch should disclose matter of reprobation, in the shape of weak, criminal, or infamous conduct, surely the exposure is merited; such subjects should suffer in silence, and none will be the wiser for it. I conceive that several scenes of this character, which I have trembled and blushed over in my late friend's journal, are properly dealt with, if made public property—a source of instruction and warning to all. In a word, I cannot help thinking that the writer of the letter in question has wasted much fervent zeal to little purpose, and conjured up a ghost for the mere purpose of exorcism. This I have done for him; and I hope his fears will henceforth abate.

A moment further, good Sir Christopher. As to one or two individuals who have been singled out by the various knowing papers of the day, as the writer or subject of these chapters, you and I know well that the proper party has never yet been glanced at, nor is likely to be; and for the future, no notice whatever will be taken of their curious speculations.—Believe me ever, reverend Sir Christopher, &c.

LONDON, *September* 9, 1830.

WHEN I have seen a beautiful and popular actress, I have often thought how many young playgoers these women must intoxicate—how many even sensible, and otherwise sober heads, they must turn upside down! Some years ago, a case came under my care, which showed fully the justness of this reflection; and I now relate it, as I consider it pregnant both with interest and instruction. It will show how the energies of even a powerful and well-informed mind may be prostrated by the indulgence of unbridled passions.

Late one evening in November, I was summoned in haste to visit a gentleman who was staying at one of the hotels in Covent Garden, and informed in a note that he had manifested symptoms of insanity. As there is no time to be lost in such cases, I hurried to the —— Hotel, which I reached about nine o'clock. The proprietor gave me some preliminary information about the patient to whom I was summoned, which, with what I subsequently gleaned from the party himself and other quarters, I shall present connectedly to the reader, before introducing him to the sick man's chamber.

Mr Warningham—for that name may serve to indicate him through this narrative—was a young man of considerable fortune, some family, and a member of —— College, Cambridge. His person and manners were gentlemanly; and his countenance, without possessing any claims to the character of handsome, faithfully indicated a powerful and cultivated mind. He had mingled largely in college gaieties and dissipations, but knew little or nothing of what is called "town life;" which may, in a great measure, account for much of the simplicity and extravagance of the conduct I am about to relate. Having, from his youth upwards, been accustomed to the instant gratification of almost every wish he could form, the slightest obstacle in his way was sufficient to irritate him almost to frenzy. His temperament was very ardent—his imagination lively and active. In short, he passed everywhere for what he really was—a very clever man—

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extensively read in elegant literature, and particularly intimate with the dramatic writers. About a fortnight before the day on which I was summoned to him, he had come up from College to visit a young lady whom he was addressing; but finding her unexpectedly gone to Paris, he resolved to continue in London the whole time he had proposed to himself, and enjoy all the amusements about town, particularly the theatres. The evening of the day on which he arrived at the —— Hotel beheld him at Drury Lane, witnessing a new, and, as the event proved, a very popular tragedy. In the afterpiece, Miss —— was a prominent performer; and her beauty of person—her "maddening eyes," as Mr Warningham often called them—added to her fascinating *naïveté* of manner, and the interesting character she sustained that evening—at once laid prostrate poor Mr Warningham among the throng of worshippers at the feet of this "Diana of the Ephesians."

As he found she played again the next evening, he took care to engage the stage-box; and fancied he had succeeded in attracting her attention. He thought her lustrous eyes fell on him several times during the evening, and that they were instantly withdrawn, with an air of conscious confusion and embarrassment, from the intense and passionate gaze which they encountered. This was sufficient to fire the train of Mr Warningham's susceptible feelings; and his whole heart was in a blaze instantly. Miss —— sang that evening one of her favourite songs—an exquisitely pensive and beautiful air; and Mr Warningham, almost frantic with excitement, applauded with such obstreperous vehemence, and continued shouting "*encore—encore*"—so long after the general calls of the house had ceased, as to attract all eyes for an instant to his box. Miss —— could not, of course, fail to observe his conduct; and presently herself looked up with what *he* considered a gratified air. Quivering with excitement and nervous irritability, Mr Warningham could scarcely sit out the rest of the piece; and the moment the curtain fell, he hurried round to the stage-door, determined to wait and see her leave, for the purpose, if possible, of speaking to her. He presently saw her approach the door, closely muffled, veiled, and bonneted, leaning on the arm of a man of military appearance, who handed her into a very gay chariot. He perceived at once that it was the well-known Captain ——. Will it be believed that this enthusiastic young man actually jumped up behind the carriage which contained the object of his idolatrous homage, and did not alight till it drew up opposite a large house in the western suburbs; and that this absurd feat, moreover, was performed amid an incessant shower of small searching rain?

He was informed by the footman, whom he had bribed with five shillings, that Miss ——'s own house was in another part of the town, and that her stay at Captain ——'s was only for a day or two. He returned to his hotel in a state of tumultuous excitement, which can be better conceived than described. As may be supposed, he slept little that night; and the first thing he did in the morning was to despatch his groom, with orders to establish himself in some public-house which could command a view of Miss ——'s residence, and return to Covent Garden as soon as he had seen her or her maid enter. It was not till seven o'clock that he brought word to his master that no one had entered but Miss ——'s maid. The papers informed him that Miss —— played again that evening; and though he could not but be aware of the sort of intimacy which subsisted between Miss —— and the Captain, his enthusiastic passion only increased with increasing obstacles. Though seriously unwell with a determination of blood to the head, induced by the perpetual excitement of his feelings, and a severe cold caught through exposure to the rain on the preceding evening—he was dressing for the play, when, to his infinite mortification, his friendly medical attendant, happening to step in, positively forbade his leaving the room,

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and consigned him to bed and physic, instead of the maddening scenes of the theatre. The next morning he felt relieved from the more urgent symptoms; and his servant having brought him word that he had at last watched Miss —— enter her house, unaccompanied, except by her maid, Mr Warningham despatched him with a copy of passionate verses, enclosed in a blank envelope. He trusted that some adroit allusions in them might possibly give her a clue to the discovery of the writer—especially if he could contrive to be seen by her that evening in the same box he had occupied formerly; for to the play he was resolved to go, in defiance of the threats of his medical attendant. To his vexation he found the box in question pre-engaged for a family party; and—will it be credited? —he actually entertained the idea of discovering who they were, for the purpose of prevailing on them to vacate in his favour! Finding that, however, of course, out of the question, he was compelled to content himself with the corresponding box opposite, where he was duly ensconced the moment the doors were opened.

Miss —— appeared that evening in only one piece, but, in the course of it, she had to sing some of her most admired songs. The character she played, also, was a favourite both with herself and the public. Her dress was exquisitely tasteful and picturesque, and calculated to set off her figure to the utmost advantage. When, at a particular crisis of the play, Mr Warningham, by the softened lustre of the lowered foot-lights, beheld Miss —— emerging from a romantic glen, with a cloak thrown over her shoulders, her head covered with a velvet cap, over which drooped, in snowy pendency, an ostrich feather, while her hair strayed from beneath the cincture of her cap in loose negligent curls, down her face and beautiful cheeks; when he saw the timid and alarmed air which her part required her to assume, and the sweet and sad expression of her eyes, while she stole about, as if avoiding a pursuer; when, at length, as the raised foot-lights were restored to their former glare, she let fall the cloak which had enveloped her, and, like a metamorphosed chrysalis, burst in beauty on the applauding house, habited in a costume which, without being positively indelicate, was calculated to excite the most voluptuous thoughts; when, I say, poor Mr Warningham saw all this, he was almost overpowered, and leaned back in his box breathless with agitation.

A little before Miss —— quitted the stage for the last time that evening, the order of the play required that she should stand for some minutes on that part of the stage next to Mr Warningham's box. While she was standing in a pensive attitude, with her face turned full towards Mr Warningham, he whispered, in a quivering and under tone, "Oh, beautiful, beautiful creature!" Miss —— heard him, looked at him with a little surprise; her features relaxed into a smile, and, with a gentle shake of the head, as if hinting that he should not endeavour to distract her attention, she moved away to proceed with her part. Mr Warningham trembled violently; he fancied she encouraged his attentions, and—Heaven knows how—had recognised in him the writer of the verses she had received. When the play was over, he hurried, as on a former occasion, to the stage-door, where he mingled with the inquisitive little throng usually to be found there, and waited till she made her appearance, enveloped, as before, in a large shawl, but followed only by a maid-servant, carrying a bandbox. They stepped into a hackney-coach, and, though Mr Warningham had gone there for the express purpose of speaking to her, his knees knocked together, and he felt so sick with agitation, that he did not even attempt to hand her into the coach. He jumped into the one which drew up next, and ordered the coachman to follow the preceding one wherever it went. When it approached the street where he knew she resided, he ordered it to stop, got out, and hurried on foot towards the house, which he reached just as she was alighting. He offered her his arm. She looked at him with

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astonishment, and something like apprehension. At length she appeared to recognise in him the person who had attracted her attention by whispering when at the theatre, and seemed, he thought, a little discomposed. She declined his proffered assistance—said her maid was with her—and was going to knock at the door, when Mr Warningham stammered faintly, "Dear madam, do allow me the honour of calling in the morning, and inquiring how you are after the great exertions at the theatre this evening!" She replied in a cold and discouraging manner: could not conceive to what she was indebted for the honour of his particular attentions, and interest in her welfare, so suddenly felt by an utter stranger—unusual—singular—improper—unpleasant, &c. She said that, as for his calling in the morning, if he felt so inclined, she, of course, could not prevent him; but if he expected to see her when he called, he would find himself "perfectly mistaken." The door that moment was opened, and closed upon her, as she made him a cold bow, leaving Mr Warningham, what with chagrin and excessive passion for her, almost distracted. He seriously assured me that he walked to and fro before her door till nearly six o'clock in the morning; that he repeatedly ascended the steps, and endeavoured, as nearly as he could recollect, to stand on *the very spot* she had occupied while speaking to him, and would remain gazing at what he fancied was the window of her bed-room, for ten minutes together; and all this extravagance, to boot, was perpetrated amidst an incessant fall of snow, and at a time—Heaven save the mark!—when he was an accepted suitor of Miss ——, the young lady whom he had come to town for the express purpose of marrying. I several times asked him how it was that he could bring himself to consider such conduct consistent with honour or delicacy, or feel a spark of real attachment for the lady to whom he was engaged, if it were not sufficient to steel his heart and close his eyes against the charms of any other woman in the world? His only reply was, that he "really could not help it"—he felt "rather the patient than agent." Miss —— took his heart, he said, by storm, and forcibly ejected, for a while, his love for any other woman breathing!

To return, however: About half-past six, he jumped into a hackney coach which happened to be passing through the street, drove home to the hotel in Covent Garden, and threw himself on the bed, in a state of utter exhaustion, both of mind and body. He slept on heavily till twelve o'clock at noon, when he awoke seriously indisposed. For the first few moments he could not dispossess himself of the idea that Miss —— was standing by his bedside, in the dress she wore the preceding evening, and smiled encouragingly on him. So strong was the delusion, that he actually addressed several sentences to her! About three o'clock he drove out, and called on one of his gay friends, who was perfectly *au fait* at matters of this sort, and resolved to make him his confidant in the affair. Under the advice of this Mentor, Mr Warningham purchased a very beautiful emerald ring, which he sent off instantly to Miss ——, with a polite note, saying it was some slight acknowledgment of the delight with which he witnessed her exquisite acting, &c. &c. &c. This, his friend assured him, *must* call forth an answer of some sort or other, which would lead to another—and another—and another—and so on. He was right. A twopenny post letter was put into Mr Warningham's hands the next morning before he rose, which was from Miss ——, elegantly written, and thanked him for the "tasteful present" he had sent her, which she should, with great pleasure, take an early opportunity of gratifying him by wearing in public.

There never yet lived an actress, I verily believe, who had fortitude enough to refuse a present of jewellery!

What was to be done next he did not exactly know; but having succeeded at last in opening an avenue of communication with her, and in-

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duced her so easily to lie under an obligation to him, he felt convinced that his way was now clear. He determined, therefore, to call and see her that very afternoon; but his medical friend, seeing the state of feverish excitement in which he continued, absolutely interdicted him from leaving the house. The next day he felt considerably better, but was not allowed to leave the house. He could, therefore, find no other means of consoling himself than writing a note to Miss ——, saying he had "something important" to communicate to her, and begging to know when she would permit him to wait upon her for that purpose. What does the reader imagine this pretext of "something important" was? To ask her to sit for her portrait to a young artist! His stratagem succeeded; for he received, in the course of the next day, a polite invitation to breakfast with Miss —— on the next Sunday morning; with a hint that he might expect no other company, and that Miss —— was "curious" to know what his particular business with her was. Poor Mr Warningham! How was he to exist in the interval between this day and Sunday? He would fain have annihilated it.

Sunday morning at last arrived; and, about nine o'clock, he sallied from his hotel—the first time he had left it for several days—and drove to the house. With a fluttering heart he knocked at the door, and a maid-servant ushered him into an elegant apartment, in which breakfast was laid. An elderly lady, some female relative of the actress, was reading a newspaper at the breakfast-table; and Miss —— herself was seated at the piano, practising one of those exquisite songs which had been listened to with breathless rapture by thousands. She wore an elegant morning-dress; and, though her infatuated visitor had come prepared to see her at a great disadvantage, divested of the dazzling complexion she exhibited on the stage, her pale and somewhat sallow features, which wore a pensive and fatigued expression, served to rivet the chains of his admiration still stronger with the feelings of sympathy. Her beautiful eyes beamed on him with sweetness and affability; and there was an ease, a gentleness in her manners, and a soft animating tone in her voice, which filled Mr Warningham with emotions of indescribable tenderness. A few moments beheld them seated at the breakfast-table; and when Mr Warningham gazed at his fair hostess, and reflected on his envied contiguity to one whose beauty and talents were the theme of universal admiration—listened to her lively and varied conversation, and perceived a faint crimson steal for an instant over her countenance, when he reminded her of his exclamation at the theatre—he felt a swelling excitement, which would barely suffer him to preserve an exterior calmness of demeanour. He felt, as he expressed it—(for he has often recounted these scenes to me)—that she was *maddening* him! Of course, he exerted himself in conversation to the utmost; and his observations on almost every topic of polite literature were met with equal spirit and sprightliness by Miss ——. He found her fully capable of appreciating the noblest passages from Shakspeare and some of the older English dramatists, and that was sufficient to lay enthusiastic Mr Warningham at the feet of any woman. He was reciting a passionate passage from Romeo and Juliet, to which Miss —— was listening with an apparent air of kindling enthusiasm, when a phaeton dashed up to the door, and an impetuous thundering of the knocker announced the arrival of some aristocratical visitor. The elderly lady who was sitting with them started, coloured, and exclaimed —"Good God! will you receive *the man* this morning?"

"O, it's only Lord ——!" exclaimed Miss —— with an air of indifference, after having examined the equipage through the window-blinds, "and I won't see the man—that's flat. He pesters me to death," she continued, turning to Mr Warningham, with a pretty peevish air. It had its effect on him. What an enviable fellow I

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am, to be received when *Lords* are refused! thought Mr Warningham.

"Not at home!" drawled Miss —— coldly, as the servant brought in Lord ——'s card. "You know one can't see *every* body, Mr Warningham," she said with a smile. "Oh, Mr Warningham!—lud, lud!—don't go to the window till the man's gone!" she exclaimed; and her small white hand, with his emerald ring glistening on her second finger, was hurriedly laid on his shoulder, to prevent his going to the window. Mr Warningham declared to me he could that moment have settled his whole fortune on her!

After the breakfast things were removed she sat down, at his request, to the piano—a very magnificent present from the Duke of ——, Mrs —— assured him—and sang and played whatever he asked. She played a certain well-known arch air, with the most bewitching simplicity. Mr Warningham could only *look* his feelings. As she concluded it, and was dashing off the symphony in a careless but rapid and brilliant style, Mrs ——, the lady once or twice before mentioned, left the room; and Mr Warningham, scarce knowing what he did, suddenly sank on one knee, from the chair on which he was sitting by Miss ——, grasped her hand, and uttered some exclamation of passionate fondness. Miss —— turned to him a moment, with a surprised air, her large, liquid, blue eyes, almost entirely hid beneath her half-closed lids; her features relaxed into a coquettish smile, she disengaged her hand, and went on playing and singing—

"He sighs—'Beauty! I adore thee,
See me fainting thus before thee;'
But I say—
Fal, lal, lal, la! Fal, lal, lal, la!
Fal, lal," &c.

"Fascinating, angelic woman!—glorious creature of intellect and beauty, I cannot live but in your presence!" gasped Mr Warningham.

"O Lord! what an actor you would have made, Mr Warningham—indeed you would! Only think how it would sound—'*Romeo, Mr Warningham!*'—Lud, lud!—the man would almost persuade me that he was in earnest!" replied Miss ——, with the most enchanting air, and ceased playing. Mr Warningham continued addressing her in the most extravagant manner; indeed, he afterwards told me, he felt "as though his wits were slipping from him every instant."

"Why don't you go on the stage, Mr Warningham?" inquired Miss ——, with a more earnest and serious air than she had hitherto manifested, and gazing at him with an eye which expressed real admiration—for she was touched by the winning, persuasive, and passionate eloquence with which Mr Warningham expressed himself. She had hardly uttered the words, when a loud and long knock was heard at the street-door. Miss —— suddenly started from the piano, turned pale, and exclaimed, in a hurried and agitated tone—"Lord, lord, what's to be done?—Captain ——! what ever can have brought him up to town—oh! my ——."

"Good God; madam, what can possibly alarm you in this manner?" exclaimed Mr Warningham, with a surprised air. "What on earth can there be in this Captain —— to startle you in this manner? What can the man want here, if his presence is disagreeable to you? Pray, madam, give him the same answer you gave Lord ——!"

"O, Mr Warn—dear, dear! the door is opened—what *will* become of me if Captain —— sees you here? Ah! I have it—you must—country manager—provincial enga—" hurriedly muttered Miss ——, as the room door opened, and a gentleman of a lofty and military bearing, dressed in a blue surtout and white trousers, with a slight walking-cane in his hand, entered, and without observing Mr Warningham, who at the moment happened to be standing rather behind the door, hurried towards Miss ——, exclaiming, with a gay and fond air, "Ha, my charming De Medici, how d'ye do?—Why, whom have we *here?*" he inquired, suddenly breaking off, and turning with an astonished air towards Mr Warningham.

"What possible business can *this person* have here, Miss ——?" inquired

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the Captain with a cold and angry air, letting fall her hand, which he had grasped on entering, and eyeing Mr Warningham with a furious scowl. Miss —— muttered something indistinctly about business—a provincial engagement—and looked appealingly towards Mr Warningham, as if beseeching him to take the cue, and assume the character of a country manager. Mr Warningham, however, was not experienced enough in matters of this kind to take the hint.

"My good sir—I beg pardon, *Captain*"—said he, buttoning his coat, and speaking in a voice almost choked with fury—"What is the meaning of all this? What do you mean, sir, by this insolent bearing towards me?"

"Good God! Do you know, sir, whom you are speaking to?" inquired the Captain, with an air of wonder.

"I care as little as I know, sir; but *this* I know—I shall give you to understand, that, whoever you are, I won't be *bullied* by you."

"The devil!" exclaimed the Captain slowly, as if he hardly comprehended what was passing. Miss ——, pale as a statue, and trembling from head to foot, leaned speechless against the corner of the piano, apparently stupified by the scene that was passing.

"Oh, by ——! this will never do," at length exclaimed the Captain, as he rushed up to Mr Warningham, and struck him furiously over the shoulders with his cane. He was going to seize Mr Warningham's collar with his left hand, as if for the purpose of inflicting further chastisement, when Mr Warningham, who was a very muscular man, shook him off, and dashed his right hand full into the face of the Captain. Miss —— shrieked for assistance—while the Captain put himself instantly into attitude, and, being a first-rate "miller," as the phrase is, before Mr Warningham could prepare himself for the encounter, let fall a sudden shower of blows about Mr Warningham's head and breast, that fell on him like the strokes of a sledge-hammer. He was, of course, instantly laid prostrate on the floor in a state of insensibility, and recollected nothing further till he found himself lying in his bed at the —— Hotel, about the middle of the night, faint and weak with the loss of blood, his head bandaged, and amid all the *désagrémens* and attendance of a sick man's chamber. How or when he had been conveyed to the hotel he knew not, till he was informed, some weeks afterwards, that Captain ——, having learned his residence from Miss ——, had brought him in his carriage in a state of stupor. All the circumstances above related combined to throw Mr Warningham into a fever, which increased upon him: the state of nervous excitement in which he had lived for the last few days aggravated the other symptoms—and delirium deepened into downright madness. The medical man, who has been several times before mentioned as a friendly attendant of Mr Warningham, finding that matters grew so serious, and being unwilling any longer to bear the sole responsibility of the case, advised Mr Warningham's friends, who had been summoned from a distant county to his bedside, to call me in: and this was the *statu quo* of affairs when I paid my first visit.

On entering the room I found a keeper sitting on each side of the bed on which lay Mr Warningham, who was raving fearfully, gnashing his teeth, and imprecating the most frightful curses upon Captain ——. It was with the utmost difficulty that the keepers could hold him down, even though my unfortunate patient was suffering under the restraint of a strait waistcoat. His countenance, which, I think, I mentioned was naturally very expressive, if not handsome, exhibited the most ghastly contortions. His eyes glared into every corner of the room, and seemed about to start from their sockets. After standing for some moments a silent spectator of this painful scene, endeavouring to watch the current of his malady, and, at the same time, soothe the affliction of his uncle, who was standing by my side dreadfully agitated, I ventured to ap-



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proach nearer, observing him almost exhausted, and relapsing into silence—undisturbed but by heavy and stentorian breathing. He lay with his face buried in the pillow; and, on my putting my fingers to his temples, he suddenly turned his face towards me. "God bless me—Mr Kean!" said he, in an altered tone—"this is really a very unexpected honour!" He seemed embarrassed at seeing me. I determined to humour his fancy—the only rational method of dealing with such patients. I may as well say, in passing, that some persons have not unfrequently found a resemblance—faint and slight, if any at all—between my features and those of the celebrated tragedian, for whom I was on the present occasion mistaken.

"Oh! yours are terrible eyes, Mr Kean—very, very terrible! Where did you get them? What fiend touched them with such unnatural lustre? They are not human—no, no! What do you think I have often fancied they resembled?"

"Really, I can't pretend to say, sir," I replied, with some curiosity.

"Why, one of the damned inmates of hell—glaring through the fiery bars of his prison," replied Mr Warningham with a shudder. "Is not that a ghastly fancy?" he inquired.

"'Tis horrible enough, indeed," said I, determined to humour him.

"Ha, ha, ha!—Ha, ha, ha!"—roared the wretched maniac, with a laugh which made us all quake round his bedside. "I can say better things than that, though it *is* good! It's nothing like the way in which I shall talk to-morrow morning—ha, ha, ha!—for I am going down to hell, to learn some of the fiends' talk; and when I come back, I'll give you a lesson, Mr Kean, shall be worth two thousand a-year to you—ha, ha, ha!—What d'ye say to that, Othello?" He paused, and continued mumbling something to himself, in a strangely different tone of voice from that in which he had just addressed me.

"Mr Kean, Mr Kean," said he suddenly, "you're the very man I want; I suppose they had told you I had been asking for you, eh?"

"Yes, certainly, I heard"——

"Very good—'twas civil of them; but, now you are here, just shade those basilisk eyes of yours, for they blight my soul within me." I did as he directed. "Now, I'll tell you what I've been thinking—I've got a tragedy ready, very nearly at least, and there's a magnificent character for you in it—expressly written for you—a compound of Richard, Shylock, and Sir Giles—your masterpiece—a sort of *quartum quiddam*—eh—you hear me, Mr Kean?"

"Ay, and mark thee, too, Hal!" I replied, thinking a quotation from his favourite Shakspeare would soothe and flatter his inflamed fancy.

"Ah—aptly quoted—happy, happy! By the way, talking of that, I don't at all admire your personation of Hamlet—I don't, Mr Kean, I *don't*. 'Tis utterly misconceived—wrong from beginning to end—it is really. You see what an independent, straightforward critic I am—ha, ha, ha!"—accompanying the words with a laugh, if not as loud, as fearful, as his former ones. I told him I bowed to his judgment.

"Good," he answered; "genius should always be candid. Macready has a single whisper, when he inquires, '*Is it the King?*' which is worth all *your* fiendish mutterings and gaspings—ha, ha! 'Does the galled jade wince? Her withers are unwrung'—Mr Kean, how absurd you are, ill-mannered—pardon me for saying it—for interrupting me," he said, after a pause; adding with a puzzled air, "*What* was it I was talking about when you interrupted me?"

"Do you mean the tragedy?"——(I had not opened my lips to interrupt him.)

"Ha—the tragedy.

The play, the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

Ah—*the tragedy* was it I was mentioning? *Rem acu—acu tetigisti*—that's Latin, Mr Kean! Did you ever learn Latin and Greek, eh!"—I told him I had studied them a little.

"What can you mean by interrupting me thus unmannerly?—Mr Kean,

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I won't stand it. Once more—*what* was it I was talking about a few minutes ago?" He had again let slip the thread of his thoughts. "A digression, this, Mr Kean; I must be mad—*indeed* I must!" he continued, with a shudder and a look of sudden sanity—"I must be mad, and I can't help thinking what a profound knowledge of human nature Shakspeare shows when he makes *memory* the test of sanity—a vast depth of philosophy in it, eh? D'ye recollect the passage—eh, Kean?" I said I certainly could not call it to mind.

"Then it's infamous!—a shame and disgrace to you. It's quite true what people say of you—you are a mere tragedy hack! Why won't you try to get out of that mill-horse round of your hackneyed characters? Excuse me; you know I am a vast admirer of yours, but an *honest* one!—Curse me," after a sudden pause, adding, with a bewildered and angry air, "*what* was it I was going to say?—I've lost it again!—oh, a passage from Shakspeare—memory test of——Ah, *now* we have him! 'Tis this: mark and remember it!—'tis in King Lear—

——— Bring me to the test,
And I *the matter will re-word*, which *madness*
Would gambol from.

Profoundly true—isn't it, Kean?"—Of course, I acquiesced.

"Ah," he resumed, with a pleased smile, "nobody now can write like that except myself—Go it, Harry—ha, ha, ha!—Who—oo—o!" uttering the strangest kind of revolting cry I ever heard. "Oh dear, dear me, *what* was it I was saying? The thought keeps slipping from me like a lithe eel; I can't hold it. Eels, by the way, are nothing but a sort of water-snake—'tis brutal to eat them! What made me name eels, Mr Kean?" I reminded him. "Ah, there *must* be a screw loose—something wrong *here*," shaking his head; "it's all upside down—ha! *what* was it now?" I once more recalled it to his mind, for I saw he was fretting himself with vexation at being unable to take up the chain of his thoughts.

"Ah!—well now, once more—I said I'd a character for you—good; do it justice—or, by my life, I'll hiss you like a huge boa coiled in the middle of the pit! There's a thought for you, by the way!—Stay—I'm losing the thought again—hold it—hold it."

"The tragedy, sir"——

"Ah, to be sure—I've another character for Miss —— (naming the actress before mentioned)—magnificent queen of beauty—nightingale of song—radiant—peerless—Ah, lady, look on me!—look on me!" and he suddenly burst into one of the most tiger-like howls I could conceive capable of being uttered by a human being. It must have been heard in the street and market without. We who were round him stood listening, chilled with horror. When he had ceased, I said, in a soothing whisper, "Compose yourself, Mr Warningham—you'll see her by and by." He looked me full in the face, and uttered as shocking a yell as before.

"Avaunt! Out on ye! scoundrels!—fiends!" he shouted, struggling with the men who were endeavouring to hold him down. "Are you come to murder me? Ha—a—a—a!" and he fell back as though he was in the act of being choked or throttled.

"Where—where is the fiend who struck me?"—he groaned, in a fiercer under-tone; "and in HER presence, too; and she stood by looking on—cruel, beautiful, deceitful woman! Did she turn pale and tremble? Will not I have his blood—blood—blood?" and he clutched his fists with a savage and murderous force. "Ah! you around me say, does not blood cleanse the deepest, foulest stain—or hide it? Pour it on, warm and reeking—a crimson flood—and never trust me if it does not wash out insult for ever! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, let me loose! let me loose! Let me but cast my eyes on the insolent ruffian—the brutal bully—let me but lay hands on him!" and he drew in his breath, with a long, fierce, and deep respiration. "Will I not shake him out of his military trappings and fooleries? Ha, devils! unhand me. I say, unhand me, and let me loose on this Captain ——!"

In this strain the unhappy young

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man continued raving for about ten minutes longer, till he utterly exhausted himself. The paroxysm was over for the present. The keepers, aware of this (for, of course, they were accustomed to such fearful scenes as these, and preserved the most cool and matter-of-fact demeanour conceivable), relaxed their hold. Mr Warningham lay perfectly motionless, with his eyes closed, breathing slow and heavily, while the perspiration burst from every pore. His pulse and other symptoms showed me that a few more similar paroxysms would destroy him; and that, consequently, the most active remedies must be had recourse to immediately. I therefore directed what was to be done—his head to be shaved—that he should be bled copiously—kept perfectly cool and tranquil—and prescribed such medicines as I conceived most calculated to effect this object. On my way down stairs, I encountered Mr ——, the proprietor or landlord of the hotel, who, with a very agitated air, told me, he must insist on having Mr Warningham removed immediately from the hotel; for that his ravings disturbed and agitated everybody in the place, and had been loudly complained of. Seeing the reasonableness of this, my patient was, with my sanction, conveyed that evening to airy and genteel lodgings in one of the adjoining streets. The three or four following visits I paid him, presented scenes little varying from the one I have above been attempting to describe. They gradually, however, abated in violence.

I shall not be guilty of extravagance or exaggeration, if I protest, that there was sometimes a vein of sublimity in his ravings. He really said some of the very finest things I ever heard. This need not occasion wonder, if it be recollected, that "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and Mr Warningham's naturally powerful mind was filled with accumulated stores, acquired from almost every region of literature. His fancy was deeply tinged with Germanism—with *diablerie*—and some of his ghostly images used to haunt and creep after me, like spirits, gibbering and chattering the expressions with which the maniac had conjured them into being.

To me, nothing is so affecting—so terrible—so humiliating, as to see a powerful intellect, like that of Mr Warningham, the prey of insanity, exhibiting glimpses of greatness and beauty, amid all the chaotic gloom and havoc of madness; reminding* one of the mighty fragments of some dilapidated structure of Greece or Rome, mouldering apart from one another, still displaying the exquisite moulding and chiselling of the artist, and enhancing the beholder's regret that so glorious a fabric should have been destroyed by the ruthless hand of time. Insanity, indeed, makes the most fearful inroads on an intellect distinguished by its *activity*; and the flame is fed rapidly by the fuel afforded from an excitable and vigorous fancy. A tremendous responsibility is incurred, in such cases, by the medical attendants. Long experience has convinced me, that the only successful way of dealing with such patients as Mr Warningham, is chiming in readily with their various fancies, without seeming in the slightest degree shocked or alarmed by the most monstrous extravagances. The patient must never be startled by any appearance of surprise or apprehension from those around him—never irritated by contradiction, or indications of impatience. Should this be done by some inexperienced attendant, the mischief may prove irremediable by any subsequent treatment; the flame will blaze out with a fury which will consume instantly every vestige of intellectual structure, leaving the body—the shell—the bare, blackened walls alone,

A scoff, a jest, a byword through the world.

Let the patient have sea-room; allow him to dash about for a while in the tempest and whirlwind of his disordered faculties; while all that is ne-

* Two newspapers have charged the writer with borrowing this image from Dr Hallam's *Treatise on Insanity*. If that author *has* a similar thought, the coincidence is purely accidental; for I *never saw his book* in my life.

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cessary from those around is to watch the critical moment, and pour the oil of soothing acquiescence on the foaming waters. Depend upon it, the uproar will subside when the winds of opposition cease.—To return, however, to Mr Warningham. The incubus which had brooded over his intellects for more than a week, at length disappeared, leaving its victim trembling on the very verge of the grave. In truth, I do not recollect ever seeing a patient whose energies, both physical and mental, were so dreadfully shattered. He had lost almost all muscular power. He could not raise his hand to his head, alter his position in the bed, or even masticate his food. For several days, it could barely be said that he existed. He could utter nothing more than an almost inaudible whisper, and seemed utterly unconscious of what was passing around him. His sister, a young and very interesting woman, had flown to his bedside immediately the family were acquainted with his illness, and had continued ever since in daily and nightly attendance on him, till she herself seemed almost worn out. How I loved her for her pallid, exhausted, anxious, yet affectionate looks! Had not this illness intervened, she would have been before this time married to a rising young man at the Bar; yet her devoted sisterly sympathies attached her to her brother's bedside without repining, and she would never think of leaving him. Her feelings may be conceived, when it is known that she was in a great measure acquainted with the cause of her brother's sudden illness; and it was her painful duty to sit and listen to many unconscious disclosures of the most afflicting nature. This latter circumstance furnished the first source of uneasiness to Mr Warningham, on recovering the exercise of his rational faculties. He was excessively agitated at the idea of his having alluded to and described the dissipated and profligate scenes of his college life; and when he had once compelled me to acknowledge that his sister and other relations were apprised of the events which led to his illness, he sank into moody silence for some time, evidently scourging himself with the heaviest self-reproaches, and presently exclaimed—"Well, doctor, thus you see has

Even-handed justice
Compell'd the poison'd chalice to my lips—

and I have drunk the foul draught to the dregs. Yet, though I would at this moment lay down half my fortune to blot from their memories what they must have heard me utter, I shall submit in silence—I have richly earned it!—I now, however, bid farewell to debauchery—profligacy—dissipation, for ever." I interrupted him by saying, I was not aware, nor were his relatives, that he had been publicly distinguished as a debauchee. "Why, doctor," he replied, "possibly not—there may be others who have exposed themselves more absurdly than I have—who have drunk and raked more—but mine has been the viler profligacy of the *heart*—the dissipation of the *feelings*. But it shall cease! God knows I never thoroughly enjoyed it, though it has occasioned me a delirious sort of excitement, which has at length nearly destroyed me. I have clambered out of the scorching crater of Etna, scathed, but not consumed. I will now descend into the tranquil vales of virtue, and never, never leave them!" He wept—for he had not yet recovered the tone or mastery of his feelings. These salutary thoughts led to a permanent reformation; his illness, in short, had produced its effect. One other thing there was which yet occasioned him disquietude and uncertainty; he said he felt bound to seek the usual "satisfaction" from Captain ——! I and all around him, to whom he hinted it, scouted the idea; and he himself relinquished it on hearing that Captain —— had called often during his illness, and left many cards, with the most anxious inquiries after his health, and, in a day or two, had a private interview with Mr Warningham, when he apologised, in the most prompt and handsome manner, for his violent conduct, and expressed the liveliest regrets at the serious consequences with which it had been attended.

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Mr Warningham, to conclude, recovered but slowly; and as soon as his weakness would admit of the journey, removed to the family house in ——shire; from thence he went to the sea-side, and stayed there till the close of the autumn, reading philosophy and some of the leading writers on morals. He was married in October, and set off for the Continent in the spring. His constitution, however, had received a shock from which it never recovered; and, two years after, Mr Warningham died of a decline at Genoa.

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# CHAPTER VIII.

## THE BROKEN HEART.

There was a large and gay party assembled one evening, in the memorable month of June 1815, at a house in the remote western suburbs of London. Throngs of handsome and well-dressed women—a large retinue of the leading men about town—the dazzling light of chandeliers blazing like three suns overhead—the charms of music and dancing—together with that tone of excitement then pervading society at large, owing to our successful Continental campaigns, which maddened England with almost daily annunciations of victory—all these circumstances, I say, combined to supply spirit to every party. In fact, England was almost turned upside down with universal fêting! Mrs ——, the lady whose party I have just been mentioning, was in ecstasy at the eclat with which the whole was going off, and charmed with the buoyant animation with which all seemed inclined to contribute their quota to the evening's amusement. A young lady of some personal attractions, most amiable manners, and great accomplishments—particularly musical—had been repeatedly solicited to sit down to the piano, for the purpose of favouring the company with the sweet Scottish air, "The Banks of Allan Water." For a long time, however, she steadfastly resisted their importunities, on the plea of low spirits. There was evidently an air of deep pensiveness, if not melancholy, about her, which ought to have corroborated the truth of the plea she urged. She did not seem to gather excitement with the rest; and rather endured, than shared, the gaieties of the evening. Of course, the young folks around her of her own sex whispered their suspicions that she was in love; and, in point of fact, it was well known by several present, that Miss —— was engaged to a young officer who had earned considerable distinction in the Peninsular campaign, and to whom she was to be united on his return from the Continent. It need not, therefore, be wondered at, that a thought of the various casualties to which a soldier's life is exposed—especially a bold and brave young soldier, such as her intended had proved himself—and the possibility, if not probability, that he might, alas! never

Return to claim his blushing bride,

but be left behind among the glorious throng of the fallen, sufficed to overcast her mind with gloomy anxieties and apprehensions. It was, indeed, owing solely to the affectionate importunities of her relatives, that she was prevailed on to be seen in society at all. Had her own inclinations been consulted, she would have sought solitude, where she might, with weeping and trembling, commend her hopes to

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the hands of Him "who seeth in secret," and "in whose hands are the issues" of battle. As, however, Miss ——'s rich contralto voice, and skilful powers of accompaniment, were much talked of, the company would listen to no excuses or apologies; so the poor girl was absolutely *baited* into sitting down to the piano, when she ran over a few melancholy chords with an air of reluctance and displacency. Her sympathies were soon excited by the fine tones—the tumultuous melody—of the keys she touched; and she presently struck into the soft and soothing symphony of "The Banks of Allan Water." The breathless silence of the bystanders—for nearly all the company had thronged around—was at length broken by her voice, stealing "like faint blue gushing streams" on the delighted ears of her auditors, as she commenced singing that exquisite little ballad, with the most touching pathos and simplicity. She had just commenced the verse,

> For his bride, a soldier sought her,
> And a winning tongue had he!

when, to the surprise of everybody around her, she suddenly ceased playing and singing, without removing her hands from the instrument, and gazed steadfastly forward with a vacant air, while the colour faded from her cheeks, and left them pale as the lily. She continued thus for some moments, to the alarm and astonishment of the company—motionless, and apparently unconscious of any one's presence. Her elder sister, much agitated, stepped towards her, placed her hand on her shoulder, endeavoured gently to rouse her, and said, hurriedly, "Anne, Anne! what is the matter?" Miss —— made no answer; but a few moments after, without moving her eyes, suddenly burst into a piercing shriek! Consternation seized all present.

"Sister—sister!—Dear Anne, are you ill?" again inquired her trembling sister, endeavouring to rouse her, but in vain. Miss —— did not seem either to see or hear her. Her eyes still gazed fixedly forward, till they seemed gradually to expand, as it were, with an expression of glassy horror. All present seemed utterly confounded, and afraid to interfere with her. Whispers were heard, "She's ill—in a fit—run for some water! Good God!—How strange!—What a piercing shriek!" —&c. &c. At length Miss ——'s lips moved. She began to mutter inaudibly; but by and by those immediately near her could distinguish the words, "There!—there they are—with their lanterns. Oh! they are looking out for the *de—a—d!*—They turn over the heaps. Ah!—now—no;—that little hill of slain—see, see!—they are turning them over one by one—There! —THERE HE IS!—Oh! horror! horror! horror!—RIGHT THROUGH THE HEART!" and, with a long shuddering groan, she fell senseless into the arms of her horror-struck sister. Of course, all were in confusion and dismay—not a face present but was blanched with agitation and affright, on hearing the extraordinary words she uttered. With due delicacy and propriety of feeling, all those whose carriages had happened to have already arrived, instantly took their departure, to prevent their presence embarrassing or interfering with the family, who were already sufficiently bewildered. The room was soon thinned of all, except those who were immediately engaged in rendering their services to the young lady; and a servant was instantly despatched with a horse, for me. On my arrival, I found her in bed (still at the house where the party was given, which was that of the young lady's sister-in-law). She had fallen into a succession of swoons ever since she had been carried up from the drawing-room, and was perfectly senseless when I entered the bedchamber where she lay. She had not spoken a syllable since uttering the singular words just related; and her whole frame was cold and rigid—in fact, she seemed to have received some strange shock, which had altogether paralysed her. By the use, however, of strong stimulants, we succeeded in at length restoring her to something like consciousness; but I think it would have

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been better for her, judging from the event, never to have woke again from forgetfulness. She opened her eyes under the influence of the searching stimulants we applied, and stared vacantly for an instant on those standing round her bedside. Her countenance, of an ashy hue, was damp with clammy perspiration, and she lay perfectly motionless, except when her frame undulated with long deep-drawn sighs.

"Oh, wretched, wretched, wretched girl!" she murmured at length, "Why have I lived till now? Why did you not suffer me to expire? He called me to join him—I was going—and you will not let me—but I MUST go—yes, yes!"

"Anne—dearest!—why do you talk so? Charles is not gone—he will return soon—he will indeed," sobbed her sister.

"Oh, never, never! You could not see what I saw, Jane"—she shuddered—"Oh, it was frightful! How they tumbled about the heaps of the dead!—how they stripped—oh, horror, horror!"

"My dear Miss ——, you are dreaming—raving—indeed you are," said I, holding her hand in mine. "Come, come, you must not give way to such gloomy, such nervous fancies—you must not indeed. You are frightening your friends to no purpose."

"What do you mean?" she replied, looking me suddenly full in the face. "I tell you it is true! Ah me! Charles is dead!—I know it—I saw him! *Shot right through the heart!* They were stripping him, when"——, and heaving three or four short convulsive sobs, she again swooned. Mrs ——, the lady of the house (the sister-in-law of Miss ——, as I think I have mentioned), could endure the distressing scene no longer, and was carried out of the room, fainting, in the arms of her husband. With great difficulty, we succeeded in restoring Miss —— once more to consciousness; but the frequency and duration of her relapses began seriously to alarm me. The spirit, being brought so often to the brink, might at last suddenly flit off into eternity without any one's being aware of it. I, of course, did all that my professional knowledge and experience suggested; and, after expressing my readiness to remain all night in the house, in the event of any sudden alteration in Miss —— for the worse, I took my departure, promising to call very early in the morning. Before leaving, Mr —— had acquainted me with all the particulars above related; and, as I rode home, I could not help feeling the liveliest curiosity, mingled with the most intense sympathy for the unfortunate sufferer, to see whether the corroborating event would stamp the present as one of those extraordinary occurrences, which occasionally "come o'er us like a summer cloud," astonishing and perplexing every one.

The next morning, about nine o'clock, I was again at Miss ——'s bedside. She was nearly in the same state as that in which I had left her the preceding evening—only feebler, and almost continually stupified. She seemed, as it were, stunned with some severe, but invisible stroke. She said scarcely anything, but often uttered a low, moaning, indistinct sound, and whispered, at intervals, "Yes—shortly, Charles, shortly—to-morrow." There was no rousing her by conversation; she noticed no one, and would answer no questions. I suggested the propriety of calling in additional medical assistance; and, in the evening, met two eminent brother physicians in consultation at her bedside. We came to the conclusion that she was sinking rapidly, and that, unless some miracle intervened to restore her energies, she would continue with us but a very little longer. After my brother physicians had left, I returned to the sick-chamber, and sat by Miss ——'s bedside for more than an hour. My feelings were much agitated at witnessing her singular and affecting situation. There was such a sweet and sorrowful expression about her pallid features, deepening, occasionally, into such hopelessness of heart-broken anguish, as no one could contemplate without deep emotion. There was, besides, something mysterious and awing—

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something of what in Scotland is called *second sight*—in the circumstances which had occasioned her illness.

"Gone—gone!" she murmured, with closed eyes, while I was sitting and gazing in silence on her; "gone—and in glory! I shall see the young conqueror—I shall! How he will love me! Ah! I recollect," she continued, after a long interval, "it was 'The Banks of Allan Water' those cruel people made me sing—and my heart breaking the while!—What was the verse I was singing when I saw"—she shuddered—"oh!—this—

For his bride, a soldier sought her,
And a winning tongue had he—
On the banks of Allan Water
None so gay as she!
But the summer grief had brought her,
And the soldier—false was he—

Oh, no, no, never—Charles—my poor murdered Charles—never!" she groaned; and spoke no more that night. She continued utterly deaf to all that was said in the way of sympathy or remonstrance; and, if her lips moved at all, it was only to utter faintly some such words as "Oh, let me—let me leave in peace!" During the two next days she continued drooping rapidly. The only circumstance about her demeanour particularly noticed, was, that she once moved her hands for a moment over the counterpane, as though she were playing the piano—a sudden flush overspread her features—her eyes stared, as though she was startled by the appearance of some phantom or other, and she gasped, "There, there!"—after which she relapsed into her former state of stupor.

Now, will it be credited that, on the fourth morning of Miss ——'s illness, a letter was received from Paris by her family, with a black seal, and franked by the noble colonel of the regiment in which Charles —— had served, communicating the melancholy intelligence that the young captain had fallen towards the close of the battle of Waterloo; for, while in the act of charging at the head of his corps, a French cavalry officer shot him with his pistol *right through the heart!* The whole family, with all their acquaintance, were unutterably shocked at the news, and almost petrified with amazement at the strange corroboration of Miss ——'s prediction. How to communicate it to the poor sufferer was now a serious question; or whether to communicate it at all at present. The family, at last, considering that it would be unjustifiable in them any longer to withhold the intelligence, intrusted the painful duty to me. I therefore repaired to her bedside alone, in the evening of the day on which the letter had been received: that evening was the last of her life! I sat down in my usual place beside her, and her pulse, countenance, breathing, cold extremities, together with the fact that she had taken no nourishment whatever since she had been laid on her bed, convinced me that the poor girl's sufferings were soon to terminate. I was at a loss, for a length of time, how to break the oppressive silence. Observing, however, her fading eyes fixed on me, I determined, as it were accidentally, to attract them to the fatal letter which I then held in my hand. After a while she observed it; her eye suddenly settled on the ample coroneted seal, and the sight operated something like an electric shock. She seemed struggling to speak, but in vain. I now wished to Heaven I had never agreed to undertake the duty which had been imposed upon me. I opened the letter, and, looking steadfastly at her, said, in as soothing tones as my agitation could command—"My dear girl—now, don't be alarmed, or I shall not tell you what I was going to tell you."—She trembled, and her sensibilities seemed suddenly restored; for her eye assumed an expression of alarmed intelligence, and her lips moved about like those of a person who feels them parched with agitation, and endeavours to moisten them. "This letter has been received to-day from Paris," I continued: "it is from Colonel ——, and brings word—that—that—that"—I felt suddenly choked, and could not bring out the words.

"That my Charles is DEAD—I know it. Did I not tell you so?" said Miss ——, interrupting me, with as clear.

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and distinct a tone of voice as she ever had in her life. I felt confounded. Had the unexpected operation of the news I brought been able to dissolve the spell which had withered her mental energies, and afford promise of her restoration to health?

Has the reader ever watched a candle, which is flickering and expiring in its socket, suddenly shoot up into an instantaneous brilliance, and then be utterly extinguished? I soon saw it was thus with poor Miss ——. All the expiring energies of her soul were suddenly collected to receive this corroboration of her vision—if such it may be called—and then she would,

> Like a lily drooping,
> Bow her head and die.

To return: She begged me, in a faltering voice, to read her all the letter. She listened with closed eyes, and made no remark when I had concluded. After a long pause, I exclaimed—"God be praised, my dear Miss ——, that you have been able to receive this dreadful news so firmly!"

"Doctor, tell me, have you no medicine that could make me weep? Oh, give it me, give it me! It would relieve me, for I feel a mountain on my breast—it is crushing me," she replied feebly, uttering the words at long intervals. Pressing her hand in mine, I begged her to be calm, and the oppression would soon disappear. "Oh—oh—oh, that I could weep, doctor!" She whispered something else, but inaudibly. I put my ear close to her mouth, and distinguished something like the words—"Jane!—I am—call her—hush"—accompanied with a faint, fluttering, gurgling sound. Alas! I too well understood it! With much trepidation I ordered the nurse to summon the family into the room instantly. Her sister Jane was the first that entered, her eyes swollen with weeping, and seemingly half suffocated with the effort to conceal her emotions.

"Oh, my darling, precious—my own sister Anne!" she sobbed, and knelt down at the bedside, flinging her arms round her sister's neck, kissing the gentle sufferer's cheeks and mouth.

"Anne!—love!—darling!—don't you know me?" She groaned, kissing her forehead repeatedly. Could I help weeping? All who had entered were standing around the bed, sobbing, and in tears. I kept my fingers at the wrist of the dying sufferer; but could not feel whether or not the pulse beat, which, however, I attributed to my own agitation.

"Speak—speak—my darling Anne!—speak to me; I am your poor sister Jane!" sobbed the agonised girl, continuing fondly kissing her sister's cold lips and forehead. She suddenly started—exclaimed, "O God! *she's dead!*" and sank instantly senseless on the floor. Alas! alas! it was too true: my sweet and broken-hearted patient was no more!

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# CHAPTER IX.

## CONSUMPTION.

CONSUMPTION! — Terrible, insatiable tyrant!—who can arrest thy progress, or number thy victims? Why dost thou attack almost exclusively the fairest and loveliest of our species? Why select blooming and beautiful youth, instead of haggard and exhausted age? Why strike down those who are bounding blithely from the starting-post of life, rather than the decrepit beings tottering towards its goal? By what infernal subtlety hast thou contrived hitherto to baffle the profoundest skill of science, to frustrate utterly the uses of experience, and disclose thyself only when thou hast irretrievably secured thy victim, and thy fangs are crimsoned with its blood? Destroying angel! why art thou commissioned thus to smite down the first-born of agonised humanity? What are the strange purposes of Providence, that thus letteth thee loose upon the objects of its infinite goodness!

Alas! how many aching hearts have been agitated with these unanswerable questions, and how many myriads are yet to be wrung and tortured by them! —Let me proceed to lay before the reader a short and simple statement of one of the many cases of consumption, and all its attendant broken-heartedness, with which a tolerably extensive practice has, alas! *crowded* my memory. The one immediately following has been selected, because it seemed to me, though destitute of varied and stirring incident, calculated, on many accounts, to excite peculiar interest and sympathy. Possibly there are a few who may consider the ensuing pages pervaded by a tone of exaggeration. Indeed, it is not so. My heart has really ached under the task of recording the bitter, premature fate of one of the most lovely and accomplished young women I ever knew; and the vivid recollection of her sufferings, as well as those of her anguished relatives, may have led me to adopt strong language, but not strong enough adequately to express my feelings.

Miss Herbert lost both her father and mother before she had attained her tenth year; and was solemnly committed by each to the care of her uncle, a baronet, who was unmarried, and, through disappointment in a first attachment, seemed likely to continue so to the end of his life. Two years after his brother's death, he was appointed to an eminent official situation in India, as the fortune attached to his baronetcy had suffered severely from the extravagance of his predecessors. He was for some time at a loss how to dispose of his little niece. Should he take her with him to India, accompanied by a first-rate governess, and have her carefully educated under his own eye, or leave her behind in England, at one of the fashionable boarding-schools, and trust to the general *surveillance* of a distant female relative? He decided on the former course; and accordingly, very shortly after completing her twelfth year, this little blooming exotic was transplanted to the scorching soil, and destined "to waste its sweetness" on the sultry air of India.

A more delicate and lovely little creature than was Eliza Herbert, at this period, cannot be conceived. She was the only bud from a parent stem of remarkable beauty; but, alas! that stem was suddenly withered by con-

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sumption. Her father, also, fell a victim to the fierce typhus fever, only half a year after the death of his wife. Little Eliza Herbert inherited, with her mother's beauty, her constitutional delicacy. Her figure was so slight, that it almost suggested to the beholder the idea of transparency; and there was a softness and languor in her azure eyes, beaming through their long silken lashes, which told of something too refined for humanity. Her disposition fully comported with her person and habits—arch, mild, and intelligent, with a little dash of pensiveness. She loved the shade of retirement. If she occasionally flitted for a moment into the world, its glare and uproar seemed almost to stun her gentle spirit, and fright it back into congenial privacy. She was, almost from infancy, devotedly fond of reading; and sought, with peculiar avidity, books of sentiment. Her gifted preceptress—one of the most amiable and refined of women—soon won her entire confidence, and found little difficulty in imparting to her apt pupil all the stores of her own superior and extensive accomplishments. Not a day passed over her head, that did not find Eliza Herbert riveted more firmly in the hearts of all who came near her, from her doting uncle down to the most distant domestic. Every luxury that wealth and power could procure, was of course always at her command; but her own innate propriety and just taste prompted her to prefer simplicity in all things. Flattery of all kinds she abhorred—and forsook the house of a rich old English lady, who once told her to her face she was a beautiful little angel! In short, a more lovely and amiable being than Eliza Herbert, surely never adorned the ranks of humanity. The only fear which incessantly haunted those around her, and kept Sir —— in a feverish flutter of apprehension every day of his life, was, that his niece was, in his own words, "too good—too beautiful, for this world;" and that unseen messengers from above were already flitting around her, ready to claim her suddenly for the skies. He has often described to me his feelings on this subject. He seemed conscious that he had no *right* to reckon on the continuance of her life; he felt, whenever he thought of her, an involuntary apprehension that she would, at no distant period, suddenly fade from his sight; he was afraid, he said, to let out the whole of his heart's affections on her. Like the Oriental merchant, who trembles while freighting "one bark—one little fragile bark," with the dazzling stores of his immense ALL, and committing it to the capricious dominion of wind and waves; so Sir —— often declared, that, at the period I am alluding to, he experienced cruel misgivings, that if he embarked the whole of his soul's loves on little Eliza Herbert, they were fated to be shipwrecked. Yet he regarded her every day with feelings which soon heightened into absolute idolatry!

His fond anxieties soon suggested to him, that so delicate and fragile a being as his niece, supposing for a moment the existence of any real grounds of apprehension that her constitution bore a hereditary taint, could not be thrown into a more direct path for her grave than in India; that any latent tendency to consumption would be quickened and developed with fatal rapidity in the burning atmosphere she was then breathing. His mind, once thoroughly suffused with alarms of this sort, could not ever afterwards be dispossessed of them; and he accordingly determined to relinquish his situation in India, the instant he should have realised, from one quarter or another, sufficient to enable him to return to England, and support an establishment suitable to his station in society. About five years had elapsed since his arrival in India, during which he had contrived to save a large portion of his very ample income, when news reached him that a considerable fortune had fallen to him, through the death of a remote relative. The intelligence made him, comparatively, a happy man. He instantly set on foot arrangements for returning to England, and procuring the immediate appointment of his successor.

Unknown to his niece, about a year after his arrival in India, Sir —— had

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confidentially consulted the most eminent physician on the spot. In obedience to the injunctions of the baronet, Dr C—— was in the habit of dropping in frequently, as if accidentally, *to dinner*, for the purpose of marking Miss Herbert's demeanour, and ascertaining whether there was, so to speak, the very faintest *adumbration* of any consumptive tendency. But no—his quick and practised eye detected no morbid indications; and he repeatedly gladdened the baronet's heart, by assuring him that, for any present evidence to the contrary, little Miss Herbert bade as fair for long and healthy life as any woman breathing, especially if she soon returned to the more salubrious climate of England. Though Dr C—— had never spoken professionally to her, Eliza Herbert was too quick and shrewd an observer to continue unapprised of the object of his frequent visits to her uncle's house. She had not failed to notice his searching glances; and knew well that he watched almost every mouthful of food she ate, and scrutinised all her movements. He had once also ventured to feel her pulse, in a half-in-earnest half-in-joke manner, and put one or two questions to the governess about Miss Herbert's general habits, which that good, easy, communicative creature unfortunately *told* her inquisitive little pupil!

Now, there are few things more alarming and irritating to young people, even if consciously enjoying the most robust health, than suddenly to find that they have long been, and still are, the objects of anxious medical *surveillance*. They begin naturally to suspect that there must be very good reason for it—and especially in the case of nervous, irritable temperaments; their peace of mind is thenceforward destroyed by torturing apprehensions that they are the doomed victims of some insidious, incurable malady. Of this I have known very many illustrations. Sir ——, also, was aware of its ill consequences, and endeavoured to avert even the shadow of a suspicion from his niece's mind as to the real object of Dr C——'s visits, by formally introducing him, from the first, as one of his own intimate friends. He therefore flattered himself that his niece was profoundly ignorant of the existence of his anxieties concerning her health; and was not a little startled one morning by Miss Herbert's abruptly entering his study, and, pale with ill-disguised anxiety, inquiring if there was "anything the matter with her?" Was she unconsciously *falling into a decline?* she asked, almost in so many words. Her uncle was so confounded by the suddenness of the affair that he lost his presence of mind, changed colour a little, and with a consciously embarrassed air assured her that it was "no such thing," quite a mistake—a "very ridiculous one"—a "childish whim," &c. &c. &c. He was so *very* earnest and energetic in his assurances that there was no earthly ground for apprehension, and, in short, concealed his alarm so clumsily, that his poor niece, though she left him with a kiss and a smile, and affected to be satisfied, retired to her own room, and from that melancholy moment resigned herself to her grave. Of this, she herself, three years subsequently, in England, assured me. She never afterwards recovered that gentle buoyancy and elasticity of spirits which made her burst upon her few friends and acquaintance like a little lively sunbeam of cheerfulness and gaiety. She felt perpetually haunted by gloomy though vagué suspicions, that there was something *radically wrong* in her constitution—that it was from her birth sown with the seeds of death—and that no earthly power could eradicate them. Though she resigned herself to the dominion of such harassing thoughts as these while alone, and even shed tears abundantly, she succeeded in banishing, to a great extent, her uncle's disquietude, by assuming even greater gaiety of demeanour than before. The baronet took occasion to mention the little incident above related to Dr C——, and was excessively agitated to see the physician assume a very serious air.

"This may be attended with more mischief than you are aware of, Sir ——," he replied. "I feel it my duty to tell you how miserably unfortunate

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for her it is, that Miss Herbert has at last detected your restless uneasiness about her health, and the means you have taken to watch her constitution. Henceforward she may *appear* satisfied—but mark me if she can ever forget it. You will find her fall frequently into momentary fits of absence and thoughtfulness. She will brood over it," continued Dr C——.

"Why, good God! doctor," replied the baronet, "what's the use of frightening one thus? Do you think my niece is the first girl who has known that her friends are anxious about her health? If she is really, as you tell her, free from disease—why, in the name of common sense, can she *fancy* herself into a consumption?"

"No, no, Sir ——; but incessant alarm may accelerate the evil you dread, and predispose her to sink—her energies to droop—under the blow, however lightly it may at first fall, which has been so long impending. And, besides, Sir ——, I did *not* say she was free from disease, but only that I had not discerned any present *symptoms* of disease."

"Oh, stuff, stuff, doctor! nonsense!" muttered the baronet, rising and pacing the room with excessive agitation. "Can't the girl be *laughed* out of her fears?"

It may be easily believed that Sir —— spent every future moment of his stay in India in an agony of apprehension. His fears exaggerated the slightest indication of his niece's temporary indisposition into a symptom of consumption. Anything like a cough from her would send him to a pillow of thorns; and her occasional refusal of food at meal-times was received with undisguised trepidation on the part of her uncle. If he overtook her at a distance, walking out with her governess, he would follow unperceived, and strain his eyesight with endeavouring to detect anything like feebleness in her gait. These incessant, and very natural anxieties about the only being he loved in the world, enhanced by his efforts to conceal them, sensibly impaired his own health and spirits. He grew fretful and irritable in his demeanour towards every member of his establishment, and could not completely fix his thoughts for the transaction of his important official business.

This may be thought an overstrained representation of Sir ——'s state of mind respecting his niece; but by none except a young, thoughtless, or heartless reader. Let the thousand—the million—heart-wrung *parents*, who have mourned, and are now mourning, over their consumptive offspring—let *them*, I say, echo the truth of the sentiments I am expressing. Let those whose bitter fate it is to see

The bark, so richly freighted with their love,

gradually sinking, shipwrecked before their very eyes—let *them* say, whether the pen or tongue of man can furnish adequate words to give expression to their anguished feelings!

Eighteen years of age—within a trifle—was Miss Herbert, when she again set foot on her native land, and the eyes and heart of her idolising uncle leaped for joy to see her augmented health and loveliness, which he fondly flattered himself might now be destined to

Grow with her growth, and strengthen with her strength.

The voyage—though long and monotonous as usual—with its fresh breezy balminess, had given an impetus to her animal spirits; and as her slight figure stepped down the side of the gloomy colossal Indiaman which had brought her across the seas, her blue eye was bright as that of a seraph, her beauteous cheeks glowed with a soft and rich crimson, and there was a lightness, ease, and elasticity in her movements, as she tripped the short distance between the vessel and the carriage, which was in waiting to convey them to town, that filled her doating uncle with feelings of almost frenzied joy.

"God Almighty bless thee, my darling!—Bless thee—bless thee for ever, my pride! my jewel!—Long and happy be thy life in merry England!" sobbed the baronet, folding her almost convulsively in his arms, as soon as they were

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seated in the carriage, and giving her the first kiss of welcome to her native shores. The second day after they were established at one of the hotels, while Miss Herbert and her governess were riding the round of fashionable shopping, Sir —— drove alone to the late Dr Baillie. In a long interview (they were personal friends), he communicated all his distressing apprehensions about his niece's state of health, imploring him to say whether he had any real cause of alarm whatever—immediate or prospective—and what course and plan of life he would recommend for the future. Dr Baillie, after many and minute inquiries, contented himself with saying that he saw no grounds for *present* apprehensions. "It certainly did *sometimes* happen," he said, that a delicate daughter of a consumptive parent inherited her mother's tendencies to disease. As for her future life and habits, there was not the slightest occasion for medicine of any kind; she must live almost entirely in the country, take plenty of fresh dry air and exercise—especially eschew late hours and company;" and he hinted, finally, the advantages, and almost necessity, of an early matrimonial engagement.

It need hardly be said, that Sir —— resolved most religiously to follow this advice to the letter.

"I'll come and dine with you in Dover Street, at seven to-day," said Dr Baillie, "and make my own observations."

"Thank you, doctor—but—but we dine out to-day," muttered the baronet rather faintly, adding inwardly, "No, no!—no more medical *espionage*—no, no!"

Sir —— purchased a very beautiful mansion, which then happened to be for sale, situated within ten or twelve miles of London; and thither he removed, as soon as ever the preliminary arrangements could be completed.

The shrine, and its divinity, were worthy of each other. —— Hall was one of the most charming picturesque residences in the county. It was a fine antique semi-Gothic structure, almost obscured from sight in the profound gloom of forest shade. The delicious velvet greensward, spread immediately in front of the house, seemed formed for the gentle footsteps of Miss Herbert. When you went there, if you looked carefully about, you might discover a little white tuft glistening on some part or other of the "smooth soft-shaven lawn;" it was her pet lamb—sweet emblem of its owner's innocence!—cropping the crisp and rich herbage. Little thing! it would scarcely submit to be fondled by any hand but that of its indulgent mistress. She, also, might occasionally be seen there, wandering thoughtfully along, with a book in her hand—Tasso, probably, or Dante—and her loose light hair straying from beneath a gipsy bonnet, commingling in pleasant contrast with a saffron-coloured ribbon. Her uncle would sit for an hour together, at a corner of his study window, overlooking the lawn, and never remove his eyes from the figure of his fair niece.

Miss Herbert was soon talked of everywhere in the neighbourhood, as the pride of the place—the star of the county. She budded forth almost visibly; and though her exquisite form was developing daily, till her matured womanly proportions seemed to have been cast in the mould of the Venus de Medici, though on a scale of more slenderness and delicacy, it was, nevertheless, outstripped by the precocious expanding of her intellect. The sympathies of her soul were attuned to the deepest and most refined sentiment. She was passionately fond of poetry; and never wandered without the sphere of what was first-rate. Dante and Milton were her constant companions by day and night; and it was a treat to hear the mellifluous cadences of the former uttered by the soft and rich voice of Miss Herbert. She could not more satisfactorily evidence her profound appreciation of the true spirit of poetry, than by her almost idolatrous admiration of the kindred genius of Handel and Mozart. She was scarcely ever known to play any other music than theirs; she would listen to none but the "mighty voices of those dim

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spirits." And then she was the most amiable and charitable creature that sure ever trode the earth! How many colds—slight, to be sure, and evanescent—had she caught, and how many rebukes from the alarmed fondness of her uncle had she suffered in consequence, through her frequent visits, in all weathers, to the cottages of the poor and sick!—"You are describing an *ideal* being, and investing it with all the graces and virtues—one that never really existed!" perhaps exclaims one of my readers. There are not a few now living, who could answer for the truth of my poor and faint description, with anguish and regret. Frequently, on seeing such instances of precocious development of the powers of both mind and body, the curt and forcible expression of Quintilian has occurred to my mind with painful force—"Quod observatum fere est, celerius occidere *festinatam maturitatem*,"* aptly rendered by the English proverb, "Soon ripe, soon rotten."

The latter part of Dr Baillie's advice was anxiously kept in view by Sir ——; and soon after Miss Herbert had completed her twentieth year, he had the satisfaction of seeing her encourage the attentions of a Captain ——, the third son of a neighbouring nobleman. He was a remarkably fine and handsome young man, of a very superior spirit, and fully capable of appreciating the value of her whose hand he sought. Sir —— was delighted, almost to ecstasy, when he extracted from the trembling, blushing girl, a confession that Captain ——'s company was anything but disagreeable to her. The young military hero was, of course, soon recognised as her suitor; and a handsome couple, people said, they would make. Miss Herbert's health seemed more robust, and her spirits more buoyant, than ever. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, when she was daily riding in an open carriage, or on horseback, over a fine breezy, champaign country, by the side of the gay, handsome, fascinating Captain ——?

* De. Inst. Orat. lib. iv. In proemio.

The baronet was sitting one morning in his study, having the day before returned from a month's visit to some friends in Ireland, and engaged with some important letters from India, when Miss B——, his niece's governess, sent a message, requesting to speak in private with him. When she entered, her embarrassed, and somewhat flurried manner, not a little surprised Sir ——.

"How is Eliza?—How is Eliza, Miss B——?" he inquired hastily, laying aside his reading-glasses. "Very well," she replied—"very;" and, after a little fencing about the necessity of making allowance for the exaggeration of alarm and anxiety, she proceeded to inform him that Miss Herbert had latterly passed restless nights—that her sleep was not unfrequently broken by a cough—a sort of faint *churchyard* cough, she said, it seemed—which had not been noticed for some time, till it was accompanied by other symptoms. —"Gracious God! madam, how was this not told me before?—Why—why did you not write to me in Ireland about it?" inquired Sir ——, with excessive trepidation. He could scarcely sit in his chair, and grew very pale; while Miss B——, herself equally agitated, went on to mention profuse night-sweats—a disinclination for food—exhaustion from the slightest exercise—a feverishness every evening—and a faint hectic flush——

"Oh, *plague-spot!*" groaned the baronet, almost choked, letting fall his reading-glasses. He tottered towards the bell, and the valet was directed to order the carriage for town immediately. "What—what possible excuse can I devise for bringing Dr Baillie here?" said he to the governess, as he was drawing on his gloves. "Well—well—I'll leave it to you—do what you can. For God's sake, madam, prepare her to see him somehow or another, for the doctor and I shall certainly be here together this evening—Oh! say I'm called up to town on sudden business, and thought I might as well bring him on with me, as he is visiting a patient in the neighbourhood—Oh! anything, madam—any-

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thing!" He hardly knew what he was saying.

Dr Baillie, however, could not come, being himself at Brighton, an invalid, and the baronet was therefore pleased, though with ill-disguised chagrin, to summon me to supply his place. On my way down, he put me in possession of most of the facts above narrated. He implored me, in tenderness to his agitated feelings, to summon all the tact I had ever acquired, and alarm the object of my visit as little as possible. I was especially to guard against appearing to know too much; I was to beat about the bush—to extract her symptoms gradually, &c. I never saw the fondest, the most doating father or mother, more agitated about an only child, than was Sir —— about his niece. He protested that he could not survive her death—that she was the only prop and pride of his declining years—and that he must fall if he lost her; and made use of many similar expressions. It was in vain that I sought him not to allow himself to be carried so much away by his fears. He must let me see her, and have an opportunity of judging whether there were any real cause of alarm, I said; and he might rely on my honour as a gentleman, that I would be frank and candid with him, to the very utmost—I would tell him the worst. I reminded him of the possibility that the symptoms he mentioned might not really exist; that they might have been seen by Miss B—— through the distorting and magnifying medium of apprehension; and that, even if they did *really* exist—why, that—that—they were not *always* the precursors of consumption, I stammered, against my own convictions. It is impossible to describe the emotions excited in the baronet, by my simply uttering the word "consumption." He said it stabbed him to the heart!

On arriving at —— Hall, the baronet and I instantly repaired to the drawing-room, where Miss Herbert and her governess were sitting at tea. The sad sunlight of September shone through the Gothic window near which they were sitting. Miss Herbert was dressed in white, and looked really dazzlingly beautiful; but the first transient glance warned me that the worst might be apprehended. I had that very morning been at the bedside of a dying young lady, a martyr to that very disease, which commences by investing its victim with a tenfold splendour of personal beauty, to be compensated for by sudden and rapid decay! Miss Herbert's eyes were lustrous as diamonds; and the complexion of her cheeks, pure and fair as that of the lily, was surmounted with an intense circumscribed crimson flush—alas, alas! the very plague-spot of hectic—of consumption. She saluted me silently, and her eyes glanced hurriedly from me to her uncle, and from him again to me. His disordered air defied disguise.

She was evidently apprised of my coming, as well as of the occasion of my visit. Indeed there was a visible embarrassment about all four of us, which I felt I was expected to dissipate, by introducing indifferent topics of conversation. This I attempted, but with little success. Miss Herbert's tea was before her on a little ebony stand, untouched; and it was evidently a violent effort only that enabled her to continue in the room. She looked repeatedly at Miss B——, as though she wished to be gone. After about half an hour's time, I alluded complimentarily to what I had heard of her performance on the piano. She smiled coldly, and rather contemptuously, as though she saw the part I was playing. Nothing daunted, however, I begged her to favour me with one of Haydn's sonatas; and she went immediately to the piano, and played what I asked—I need hardly say, exquisitely. Her uncle then withdrew for the alleged purpose of answering a letter, as had been arranged between us; and I was left alone with the two ladies. I need not fatigue the reader with a minute description of all that passed. I introduced the object of my visit as casually and as gently as I could, and succeeded more easily than I had anticipated in quieting her alarms. The answers she



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gave to my questions amply corroborated the truth of the account given by Miss B—— to the baronet. Her feverish accelerated pulse, also, told of the hot blighting breathings of the destroying angel, who was already hovering close around his victim! I was compelled to smile, with an assumed air of gaiety and nonchalance, while listening to the poor girl's unconscious disclosures of various little matters, which amounted to infallible evidence that she was already beyond the reach of medicine. I bade her adieu, complimenting her on her charming looks, and expressing my delight at finding so little occasion for my professional services! She looked at me with a half-incredulous, half-confiding eye, and with much girlish simplicity and frankness, put her hand into mine, thanking me for dispersing her fears, and begging me to do the same for her uncle. I afterwards learned that, as soon as I left the room, she burst into a flood of tears, and sighed and sobbed all the rest of the evening.

With Sir —— I felt it my duty to be candid. Why should I conceal the worst from him, when I felt as certain as I was of my own existence, that his beautiful niece was already beginning to wither away from before his eyes? Convinced that "hope deferred maketh sick the heart," I have always, in such cases, warned the patient's friends, long beforehand, of the inevitable fate awaiting the object of their anxious hopes and fears, in order that resignation might gradually steal thoroughly into their broken hearts. To return: I was conducted to the baronet's study, where he was standing with his hat and gloves on, ready to accompany me as far as the high-road, in order that I might await the arrival of a London coach. I told him, in short, that I feared I had seen and heard too much to allow a doubt that his niece's present symptoms were those of the commencing stage of pulmonary consumption; and that, though medicine and change of climate might possibly avert the evil day for a time, it was my melancholy duty to assure him, that no earthly power could save her.

"Merciful God!" he gasped, loosing his arm from mine, and leaning against the park gate, at which we had arrived. I implored him to be calm. He continued speechless for some time, with his hands clasped.

"Oh, doctor, doctor!" he exclaimed, as if a gleam of hope had suddenly flashed across his mind, "we've forgot to tell you a most material thing, which, perhaps, will alter the whole case—oh! how could we have forgotten it?" he continued, growing heated with the thought; "my niece *eats* very heartily—nay, more heartily than any of us, and seems to relish her food more." Alas! I was obliged, as I have hundreds of times before been obliged, to dash the cup from his lips, by assuring him that an almost *ravenous* appetite was as invariably a forerunner of consumption as the pilot-fish of the shark!

"O, great God! what will become of me? What shall I do?" he exclaimed, almost frantic, and wringing his hands in despair. He had lost every vestige of self-control. "Then my sweet angel must DIE! Damning thought! Oh, let me die too! I cannot—I will not—survive her!—Doctor, doctor, you must give up your London practice, and come and live in my house—you must! Oh come, come, and I'll fling my whole fortune at your feet! Only save her, and you and yours shall roll in wealth, if I go back to India to procure it!—Oh! whither—whither shall I go with my darling? To Italy—to France? My God! what shall I do when she is *gone*—for ever!" he exclaimed, like one distracted. I entreated him to recollect himself, and endeavour to regain his self-possession before returning to the presence of his niece. He started. "Oh, mockery, doctor, mockery! How can I ever look on the dear—the doomed girl again? She is no longer mine; she is in her grave—she is!"

Remonstrance and expostulation, I saw, were utterly useless, and worse, for they served only to irritate. The coach shortly afterwards drew up; and, wringing my hands, Sir —— extorted a promise that I would see his niece

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the next day, and bring Dr Baillie with me, if he should have returned to town. I was as good as my word, except that Dr Baillie could not accompany me, being still at Brighton. My second interview with Miss Herbert was long and painfully interesting. We were alone. She wept bitterly, and recounted the incident mentioned above, which occurred in India, and occasioned her first serious alarm. She felt convinced, she told me, that her case was hopeless; she saw, too, that her uncle possessed a similar conviction; and sobbed agonisingly when she alluded to his altered looks. She had felt a presentiment, she said, for some months past, which, however, she had never mentioned till then, that her days were numbered, and attributed, too truly, her accelerated illness to the noxious climate of India. She described her sensations to be that of a constant void within, as if there were a something wanting—an unnatural hollowness—a dull deep aching in the left side—a frequent inclination to relieve herself by spitting, which, when she did, alas, alas! she observed, more than once, to be streaked with blood.

"How long do you think I have to live, doctor?" she inquired faintly.

"Oh, my dear girl, do not, for Heaven's sake, ask such useless questions! —How can I possibly presume to answer them, giving you credit for a spark of common sense?" She grew very pale, and drew her handkerchief across her forehead.

"Is it likely that I shall have to endure much pain?" she asked, with increasing trepidation. I could reply only that I *hoped* not—that there was no ground for *immediate* apprehension—and I faltered, that *possibly* a milder climate, and the skill of medicine, might yet carry her through. The poor girl shook her head hopelessly, and trembled violently from head to foot.

"Oh, poor uncle! Poor, poor Ed——!" she faltered, and fell fainting into my arms; for the latter allusion to Captain —— had completely overcome her. Holding her senseless sylph-like figure in my arms, I hurried to the bell, and was immediately joined by Sir ——, the governess, and one or two female attendants. I saw the baronet was beginning to behave like a madman, by the increasing boisterousness of his manner, and the occasional glare of wildness that shot from his eye. With the utmost difficulty I succeeded in forcing him from the room, and keeping him out till Miss Herbert had recovered.

"Oh, doctor, doctor!" he muttered hoarsely, after staggering to a seat, "this is worse than death! I pray God to take her and me too, and put an end to our misery!"

I expostulated with him rather sternly, and represented to him the absurdity and impiousness of his wish.

"——!" he thundered, starting from his chair, and stamping furiously to and fro across the room, "what do you mean by drivelling in that way, doctor? Can I see my darling dying —absolutely dying by inches—before my very eyes, and yet be cool and unconcerned? I did not expect such conduct from you, doctor." He burst into tears. "Oh! I'm going mad!—I'm going mad!" he groaned, and sank again into his seat. From one or two efforts he made to force down the emotions which were swelling and dilating his whole frame, I seriously apprehended either that he would fall into a fit, or go raving mad. Happily, however, I was mistaken. His excitement gradually subsided. He was a man of remarkably strong and ardent feelings, which he had never been accustomed to control, even in the moments of their most violent manifestations; and on the present occasion, the maddening thought that the object of his long, intense, and idolising love and pride was about to be lost to him irretrievably—for ever—was sufficient to overturn his shaken intellects. I prevailed upon him to continue where he was, till I returned from his niece; for I was summoned to her chamber. I found her lying on the bed, only partially undressed. Her beautiful auburn hair hung disordered over her neck and shoulders, partially concealing her lovely marble-hued features. Her left

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hand covered her eyes, and her right clasped a little locket, suspended round her neck by a plain black ribbon, containing a little of Captain ——'s hair. Miss B——, her governess, her maid, and the housekeeper, with tears and sobs, were engaged in rendering various little services to their unfortunate young mistress; and my heart ached to think of the little—the nothing—*I* could do for her.

Two days afterwards, Dr Baillie, another physician, and myself, went down to see Miss Herbert; for a note from Miss B—— informed me that her ward had suffered severely from the agitation experienced at the last visit I had paid her, and was in a low nervous fever. The consumptive symptoms, also, were beginning to gleam through the haze of accidental indisposition with fearful distinctness! Dr Baillie simply assured the baronet that my predictions were but too likely to be verified; and that the only chance of averting the worst form of consumption (a galloping one) would be an instant removal to Italy, that the fall of the year, and the winter season, might be spent in a more genial and fostering climate. We, at the same time, frankly assured Sir ——, who listened with a sullen, despairing apathy of manner, that the utmost he had to expect from a visit to Italy, was the chance of a temporary suspension of the fate which hovered over his niece. In a few weeks, accordingly, they were all settled at Naples.

But what have I to say, all this time, the reader is possibly asking, about the individual who was singled out by fate for the first and heaviest stroke inflicted by Miss Herbert's approaching dissolution? Where was the lover? Where was Captain ——? I have avoided allusions to him hitherto, because his distress and agitation transcended all my powers of description. He loved Miss Herbert with all the passionate romantic fervour of a first attachment; and the reader must ask his own heart, what were the feelings by which that of Captain —— was lacerated.

I shall content myself with recording one little incident which occurred before the family of Sir —— left for Italy. I was retiring one night to rest, about twelve o'clock, when the startling summons of the night-bell brought me again down stairs, accompanied by a servant. Thrice the bell rang with impatient violence before the door could possibly be opened, and I heard the steps of some vehicle let down hastily.

"Is Dr —— at home?" inquired a groom, and being answered in the affirmative, in a second or two a gentleman leaped from a chariot standing at the door, and hurried into the room, whither I had retired to await him. He was in a sort of half military travelling-dress. His face was pale, his eye sunk, his hair disordered, and his voice thick and hurried. It was Captain ——, who had been absent on a shooting excursion in Scotland, and who had not received intelligence of the alarming symptoms disclosed by Miss Herbert, till within four days of that which found him at my house, on the present occasion, come to ascertain from me the *reality* of the melancholy apprehension so suddenly entertained by Sir —— and the other members of both families.

"Gracious God! Is there NO hope, doctor?" he inquired faintly, after swallowing a glass of wine, which, seeing his exhaustion and agitation, I had sent for. I endeavoured to evade giving a direct answer—attempted to divert his thoughts towards the projected trip to the Continent—dilated on the soothing, balmy climate she would have to breathe—it *had* done wonders for others, &c.—and, in a word, exhausted the stock of inefficient subterfuges and palliatives to which all professional men are, on such occasions, compelled to resort. Captain —— listened to me silently, while his eye was fixed on me with a vacant, unobserving stare. His utter wretchedness touched me to the soul; and yet, what consolation had I to offer him? After several profound sighs, he exclaimed in a flurried tone, "I see how it is. Her fate is fixed—and so is mine! Would to God—would to God,

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I had never seen or known Miss Herbert!—*What* will become of us!" He rose to go. "Doctor, forgive me for troubling you so late, but really I can rest nowhere! I must go back to —— Hall." I shook hands with him, and in a few moments the chariot dashed off.

Really I can scarcely conceive of a more dreadful state of mind than that of Captain ——, or of any one whose "heart is in the right place," to use a homely but apt expression, when placed in such wretched circumstances as those above related. To see the death-warrant sealed of her a man's soul doats on—who is the idolised object of his holiest, fondest, and possibly *first* affections! Yes, to see her bright and beautiful form suddenly snatched down into "utter darkness" by the cold relentless grasp of our common foe—"the desire of our eyes taken away as with a stroke"—may well wither one. That man's soul which would not be palsied—prostrated, by such a stroke as this, is worthless, and worse—it is a libel on his kind. He cannot *love* a woman as she should and must be loved. But why am I so vehement in expressing my feelings on the subject? Because, in the course of my professional intercourse, my soul has been often sickened with listening to the expression of opposite sentiments. The poor and pitiful *philosophy*—that the word should ever have been so prostituted!—which is now sneaking in among us, fostered by foolish lads, and men with hollow hearts and barren brains, for the purpose of weeding out from the soul's garden its richest and choicest flowers, sympathy and sentiment—*this* philosophy may possibly prompt some reader to sneer over the agonies I have been attempting to describe; but, O reader! do you eschew it—trample on it whenever, wherever you find it, for the reptile, though very little, is very venomous.

Captain ——'s regiment was ordered to Ireland, and as he found it impossible to accompany it, he sold out, and presently followed the heart-broken baronet and his niece to Italy. The delicious climate sufficed to kindle and foster for a while that deceitful *ignis fatuus*—hope, which always flits before in the gloomy horizon of consumptive patients, and leads them and their friends on—and on—and on—till it suddenly sinks quivering into their grave! They stayed at Naples till the month of July. Miss Herbert was sinking, and that with fearfully accelerated rapidity. Sir ——'s health was much impaired with incessant anxiety and watching; and Captain —— had been several times on the very borders of madness. His love for the dear being who could never be his, increased ten thousand-fold when he found it hopeless! Is it not always so?

Aware that her days were numbered, Miss Herbert anxiously importuned her uncle to return to England. She wished, she said, to breathe her last in her native isle—among the green pastures and hills of ———shire, and to be buried beside her father and mother. Sir —— listened to the utterance of these sentiments with a breaking heart. He could see no reason for refusing a compliance with her request; and, accordingly, the latter end of August beheld the unhappy family once more at —— Hall.

I once saw a very beautiful lily, of rather more than ordinary stateliness, whose stem had been snapped by the storm over-night; and, on entering my garden in the morning, there, alas! alas! lay the pride of all chaste flowers, pallid and prostrate on the very bed where it had a short while before bloomed so sweetly! This little circumstance was forcibly recalled to my recollection, on seeing Miss Herbert for the first time after her return from the Continent. It was in the spacious drawing-room at ——Hall, where I had before seen her, in the evening, and she was reclining on an ottoman, which had been drawn towards the large fretted Gothic window formerly mentioned. I stole towards it with noiseless footsteps; for the hushing, cautioning movements of those present warned me that Miss Herbert was asleep. I stood and gazed in

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silence for some moments on the lovely unfortunate—almost afraid to disturb her, even by breathing. She was wasted almost to a shadow—attenuated to nearly ethereal delicacy and transparency. She was dressed in a plain white muslin gown, and lying on an Indian shawl, in which she had been enveloped for the purpose of being brought down from her bed-chamber. Her small foot and ankle were concealed beneath white silk stockings and satin slippers—through which it might be seen how they were shrunk from the full dimensions of health. They seemed, indeed, rather the exquisite chiselling of Canova, the representation of recumbent beauty, than flesh and blood, and scarcely capable of sustaining even the slight pressure of Miss Herbert's wasted frame. The arms and hands were enveloped in long white gloves, which fitted very loosely; and her waist, encircled by a broad violet-coloured ribbon, was rather that of a young girl of twelve or thirteen, than a full-grown woman. But it was her countenance—her symmetrical features, sunk, faded, and damp with death-dews, and her auburn hair falling in rich matted careless clusters down each side of her alabaster temples and neck; it was all this which suggested the bitterest thoughts of blighted beauty, almost breaking the heart of the beholder. Perfectly motionless and statue-like lay that fair creature, breathing so imperceptibly that a rose-leaf might have slept on her lips unfluttered! On an easy-chair, drawn towards the head of the ottoman, sat her uncle, Sir ——, holding a white handkerchief in his hand, with which he, from time to time, wiped off the dews which started out incessantly on his niece's pallid forehead. It was affecting to see his hair changed to a dull iron-grey hue; whereas, before he had left for the Continent, it was jet black. His sallow and worn features bore the traces of recent tears.

And where *now* is the lover? Where is Captain ——? again inquires the reader. He was then at Milan, raving beneath the tortures and delirium of a brain fever, which flung him on his sick-bed only the day before Sir ——'s family set out for England. Miss Herbert had not been told of the circumstance till she arrived at home; and those who communicated the intelligence will never undertake such a duty again!

After some time, in which we around had maintained perfect silence, Miss Herbert gently opened her eyes; and seeing me sitting opposite her uncle, by her side, gave me her hand, and, with a faint smile, whispered some words of welcome which I could not distinguish.

"Am I much altered, doctor, since you saw me last?" she presently inquired, in a more audible tone. I said, I regretted to see her so feeble and emaciated.

"And does not my poor uncle also look very ill?" inquired the poor girl, eyeing him with a look of sorrowful fondness. She feebly extended her arms, as if for the purpose of putting them round his neck, and he seized and kissed them with such fervour that she burst into tears. "Your kindness is killing me—oh! don't, don't!" she murmured. He was so overpowered with his emotions that he abruptly rose and left the room. I then made many minute inquiries about the state of her health. I could hardly detect any pulsation at the wrist, though the blue veins, and almost the arteries, I fancied, might be seen meandering beneath the transparent skin.

* * * *

My feelings will not allow me, nor would my space, to describe every interview I had with her. She sank very rapidly. She exhibited all those sudden deceitful rallyings, which invariably agonise consumptive patients and their friends with fruitless hopes of recovery. Oh, how they are clung to! how hard to persuade their fond hearts to relinquish them! with what despairing obstinacy will they persist in "hoping against hope!" I recollect one evening, in particular, that her shattered energies were so unaccountably revived and collected, her

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eye grew so full and bright, her cheeks were suffused with so rich a vermilion her voice soft and sweet as ever, and her spirits so exhilarated, that even *I* was staggered for a moment; and poor Sir —— got so excited that he said to me, in a sort of ecstasy, as he accompanied me to my carriage, "Ah, doctor, *a phœnix!*—Doctor, a phœnix! She's rising from her ashes—ah! ha! She'll cheat you for once—darling!" and he raised his handkerchief to his eyes, for they were overflowing.

* * * *

"Doctor, you're fond of music, I believe; you won't have any objection to listen to a little now, will you? I'm exactly in the mood for it, and it's almost the only enjoyment I have left, and Miss B—— plays enchantingly. Go, love, please, and play a mass from Mozart—the one we listened to last night," said Miss Herbert, on one occasion, about a week after the interview last mentioned. Miss B——, who was in tears, immediately rose, and took her seat at the piano. She played exquisitely. I held one of my sweet patient's hands in mine, as she lay on the sofa, with her face turned towards the window, through which the retiring sunlight was streaming in tender radiance on her wasted features, after tinting richly the amber-hued groves which were visible through the window. I need not attempt to characterise the melting music which Miss B—— was pouring from the piano. I have often thought that there is a sort of *spiritual* character about some of the masses of Mozart, which draws out the greatest sympathies of one's nature, striking the deepest and most hidden chords of the human heart. On the present occasion, the peculiar circumstances in which I was placed—the time, the place, the dying angel whose hand was clasped in mine—disposed me to a more intense appreciation of Mozart's music than I had ever known before. The soft, soothing, solemn, swelling cadences undulated one after another into my full heart, till they forced the tears to gush from my eyes. I was utterly overcome. Oh, that languishing, heart-breaking music I can never forget! The form of Eliza Herbert flits before me to this day when I hear it spoken of. I will not listen to any one *play* it now—though I have often wept since on hearing it from Miss B——, to whom Miss Herbert bequeathed her piano. But, to return: My tears flowed fast; and I perceived also the crystal drops oozing through the closed eyelids of Miss Herbert. "Heart-breaking music, is it not doctor?" she murmured. I could make her no reply. I felt at that moment as if I could have laid down my life for her. After a long pause, Miss B—— continuing all the while playing, Miss Herbert sobbed—"Oh, how I should like to be buried while the organ is playing this music! And HE —HE was fond of it too!" she continued, with a long shuddering sigh. It was echoed, to my surprise, but in a profounder tone, from that quarter of the room where the grand piano was placed. It could not have been from Miss B——, I felt sure; and, looking towards her, I beheld the dim outline of Sir ——'s figure leaning against the piano, with his face buried in his white handkerchief. He had stolen into the room unperceived; for he had left it half an hour before, in a fit of sudden agitation; and, after continuing about five minutes, was compelled by his feelings again to retire. His sigh, and the noise he made in withdrawing, had been heard by Miss Herbert.

"Doctor—doctor!" she stammered faintly, turning as white as ashes, "who—who is that?—what was it?—Oh dear! it can never be—no—no—it cannot"—and she suddenly fainted. She continued so long insensible that I began to fear it was all over. Gradually, however, she recovered, and was carried up to bed, which she did not leave again for a week.

I mentioned, I think, in a former part of this narrative, Miss Herbert's partiality for poetry, and that her readings were confined to that which was of the highest order. Among the MSS. found in her desk, poor girl, after her decease, were many extracts from

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the poets, copied in a beautiful hand, and evincing true taste in their selection. She was particularly partial to *Thomson's Seasons*, especially "Winter," from which she transcribed largely. There are also a few unpretending sonnets and stanzas of her own; which, if not of first-rate excellence, breathe, nevertheless, the sweetest sentiments of virtue, simplicity, and delicacy. If I had been permitted, I should have liked to lay before the reader a little "Sonnet to a Dead Robin," and "To a Moss Rose." I have also often heard her, while sitting by her bedside, utter very beautiful thoughts, suggested by the bitterness of her own premature fate. All—all are treasured in my heart!

I have not attempted to describe her feelings with reference to Captain ——, simply because I cannot do them justice, without, perhaps, incurring the reader's suspicions that I am slipping into the character of the novelist. She did not know that Captain —— continued yet at death's door at Milan, for we felt bound to spare her feelings. We fabricated a story that he had been summoned into Egypt, to inquire after the fate of a brother who had travelled thither, and whose fate, we said, was doubtful. Poor girl! she believed us at last—and seemed rather inclined to accuse him of unkindness for allowing *anything* to withdraw him from her side. She never, however, *said* anything directly of this kind. It is hardly necessary to say that Captain —— never knew of the fiction. I have never, to this day, entirely forgiven myself for the part I took in it.

I found her one morning, within a few days of her death, wretchedly exhausted both in mind and body. She had passed, as usual, a restless night, unsoothed even by the laudanum which had been administered to her in much larger quantities than her medical attendants had authorised. It had stupified, without, at the same time, composing and calming her. Poor—poor girl! almost the last remains of her beauty had disappeared. There was a fearful hollowness in her once lovely and blooming cheeks; and her eyes—those bright orbs which had a short while ago dazzled and delighted all they shone upon—were now sunk, quenched, and surrounded by dark halos! She lay with her head buried deep in the pillow, and her hair folded back, matted with perspiration. Her hands—but I cannot attempt to describe her appearance any further.

Sir —— sat by her bedside, as he had sat all through her illness, and was utterly worn out. I occupied the chair allotted to Miss B——, who had just retired to bed, having been up all night. After a long silence, Miss Herbert asked very faintly for some tea, which was presently brought her, and dropped into her mouth by spoonfuls. Soon after, she revived a little, and spoke to me, but in so low a whisper that I had great difficulty in distinguishing her words. The exertion of utterance, also, was attended with so much evident pain that I would rather she had continued silent.

"Laudanum — laudanum — laudanum, doctor! They don't give me enough of laudanum!" she muttered. We made her no reply. Presently she began murmuring at intervals somewhat in this strain:—"Ah—among the pyramids — looking at them — sketching—ascending them, perhaps —oh! what if they should fall and crush him? Has he found his brother? On his way — home — sea — ships — ship." Still we did not interrupt her, for her manner indicated only a dim dreary sort of half-consciousness. About an hour afterwards (why did I linger there, it may be asked, when I could do nothing for her, and could ill spare the time? I know not—I *could* not leave her) she again commenced in a low, moaning, wandering tone—"Uncle! What do you think? Chatterton—poor melancholy Chatterton, sat by my side, all night long, in that chair where Dr —— is sitting. He died of a broken heart—or of my disease, didn't he? Wan—wan—sad—cold — ghostly — but so like a poet! Oh, how he talked! no one earthly like him! His voice was like the mysterious music of an Æolian harp —so solemn—soft—stealing!—— * *

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He put his icy fingers over my heart, and said *it* must soon be as cold! But he told me not to be afraid, nor weep, because I was dying so young—so early. He said I was a young rose-tree, and would have the longer to bloom and blossom when he came for me." She smiled faintly and sadly. "Oh, dear, dear!—I wish I had him here again! But he looks very cold and ghostly—never moves—nothing rustles—I never hear him come, or go—but I look, and there he is! And I'm not at all frightened, for he seems gentle; but I think he can't be happy—happy—never smiles, never!—— * * Dying people see and hear more than others!"

This, I say, is the *substance* of what she uttered. All she said was pervaded by a sad romance, which showed that her soul was deeply imbued with poetry.

"Toll!—toll!—toll!—How solemn!—White plumes!—white scarfs!—Hush!—'*Earth to earth*'—Oh, dreadful! It is crumbling on my heart! They all go—they leave me all—poor, poor Eliza!—they leave me all alone in the cold church. *He'll* often walk in the church by himself—his tears will fall on the pavement—but I shall not hear him—nor see him! He will ne—ver see me! Will the organ play, I wonder? It *may* wake me from sleep for a while!" I listened to all this, and was fit for nothing the rest of the day. Again—again I saw her, to let fall tears over the withered petals, the blighted blossoms of early beauty! It wrung my heart to see her little more than a breathing corpse. Oh! the gloom—anguish—desolation—diffused through —— Hall! It could be *felt;* it *oppressed* you on entering!

* * * On Saturday morning (the — day of November 18—), I drove down early, having the preceding evening promised to be there as soon as possible the next day. It was a scowling November morning, and my heart sank within me as my chariot rattled rapidly along the hard highway towards —— Hall. But I was TOO LATE. The curtain had fallen, and hid poor Eliza Herbert from this world for ever! She had expired about half an hour before my arrival.

* * * *

As I was returning to town, after attending the funeral of Miss Herbert, full of bitter and sorrowful thoughts, I met a travelling carriage-and-four thundering down the road. It contained poor Captain ——, his valet, and a young Italian medical attendant—all just returned from the Continent. He looked white and wasted. The crape on my hat—my gloves—weepers—mourning suit, told all instantly. I was in a moment at his side—for he had swooned.

As for the disconsolate baronet, little remains to be said. He disposed of —— Hall; and, sick of England—ill and irritable—he attempted to regain his Indian appointment, but unsuccessfully; so he betook himself to a solitary house belonging to the family in ——shire; and, in the touching language of one of old, "went on mourning to the end of his days."

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# CHAPTER X.

## THE SPECTRAL DOG.

### AN ILLUSION.

The age of ghosts and hobgoblins is gone by, says worthy Dr Hibbert; and so, after him, says almost everybody now-a-days. These mysterious visitants are henceforth to be resolved into mere optical delusions, acting on an excitable fancy—an irritable nervous temperament; and the report of a real *bona fide* ghost, or apparition, is utterly scouted. *Possibly* this may *not* be going too far, even though it *be* in the teeth of some of the most stubborn facts that are on record. One, or possibly two, of this character, I may perhaps present to the reader on a future occasion; but at present I shall content myself with relating a very curious and interesting case of acknowledged *optical delusion;* and I have no doubt that many of my medical readers can parallel it with similar occurrences within the sphere of their own observation.

Mr D—— was a clergyman of the Church of England, educated at Oxford—a scholar, a "ripe and good one" — a man of remarkably acute and powerful understanding; but, according to his own account, destitute of even an atom of imagination. He was also an exemplary minister; preached twice willingly every Sunday, and performed all the other duties of his office with zealous fidelity, and to the full satisfaction of his parishioners. If any man is less likely to be terrified with ghosts, or has less *reason* to be so, than another, surely it was such a character as Mr D——.

He had been officiating one Sunday evening for an invalid friend, at the latter's church, a few miles distant from London, and was walking homewards, enjoying the tranquillity of the night, and enlivened by the cheerful beams of the full moon; when, at about three miles' distance from town, he suddenly heard, or fancied he heard, immediately behind him, the sound of gasping and panting as of a dog following at his heels, breathless with running. He looked round on both sides, but seeing no dog, thought he must have been deceived, and resumed his walk and meditations. The sound was presently repeated. Again he looked round, but with no better success than before. After a little pause, thinking there was something rather odd about it, it suddenly struck him that what he had heard was nothing more than the noise of his own hard breathing, occasioned by the insensibly accelerated pace at which he was walking, intent upon some subject which then particularly occupied his thoughts. He had not walked more than ten paces farther, when he again heard precisely similar sounds, but with a running accompaniment—if I may be allowed a pun—of the pit-pit-pattering of a dog's feet, following close behind his left side.

"God bless me!" exclaimed Mr D—— aloud, stopping for the third time, and looking around in all directions, far and near; "why, really, that's *very* odd—very!—Surely I could not have been mistaken again?" He continued standing still, wiped his forehead, replaced his hat on his head, and, with a little trepidation, resumed his walk, striking his stout black walking-stick on the ground with a certain

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energy and resoluteness, which sufficed in reassuring his own flurried spirits. The next thirty or forty paces of his walk, Mr D—— passed over *erectis auribus*, and hearing nothing similar to the sounds which had thrice attracted his attention, was relapsing into his meditative mood, when, in a few moments, the noise was repeated, apparently from his right-hand side; and he gave something like a start from the path-side into the road, on feeling the calf of his leg brushed past, as he described it, by the shaggy coat of his invisible attendant. He looked suddenly down, and, to his very great alarm and astonishment, beheld the dim outline of a large Newfoundland dog, of a *blue* colour! He moved from the spot where he was standing—the phantom followed him—he rubbed his eyes with his hands, shook his head, and again looked; but there it still was, large as a young calf (to which he himself compared it), and had assumed a more distinct and definite form. The colour, however, continued the same—faint blue. He observed, too, its eyes—like dim-decaying fire-coals, as it looked composedly up in his face. He poked about his walking-stick, and moved it repeatedly through and through the form of the phantom; but there it continued—indivisible—impalpable—in short, as much a dog as ever, and yet the stick traversing its form in every direction, from the tail to the tip of the nose! Mr D—— hurried on a few steps, and again looked—there was the dog!—Now, it is fit the reader should be informed that Mr D—— was a remarkably temperate man, and had, that evening, contented himself with a solitary glass of port by the bedside of his sick brother; so that there was no room for supposing his perceptions to have been disturbed with liquor.

"What *can* it be?" thought he, while his heart knocked rather harder than usual against the bars of its prison—"Oh! it must be an *optical delusion*—oh, 'tis clearly so! nothing in the world else! that's all. How odd!" and he smiled, he thought, very unconcernedly; but another glimpse of the phantom standing by him in blue distinctness instantly darkened his features with the hue of apprehension. If it really *was* an optical delusion, it was the most fixed and pertinacious one he ever heard of! The best part of valour is discretion, says Shakspeare—and in all things; so, observing a coach passing by at that moment, to put an end to the matter, Mr D——, with a little trepidation in his tone, ordered it to stop; there was just room for *one* inside; and in stepped Mr D——, chuckling at the cunning fashion after which he had succeeded in jockeying his strange attendant. Not feeling inclined to talk with the fat woman who sat next him, squeezing him most unmercifully against the side of the coach, nor with the elderly grazier-looking man fronting him, whose large dirty top-boots seriously incommoded him, he shut his eyes, that he might pursue his thoughts undisturbed. After about five minutes' riding, he suddenly opened his eyes—and the first thing that met them was the figure of the blue dog, lying stretched, in some unaccountable manner, at his feet, half under the seat!

"I—I—hope THE DOG does not annoy you, sir?" inquired Mr D——, a little flustered, of the man opposite, hoping to discern whether the dog chose to be visible to any one else.

"Sir!" exclaimed the person he addressed, starting from a kind of doze, and staring about in the bottom of the coach.

"Lord, sir!" echoed the woman beside him.

"A DOG, sir, did you say?" inquired all in a breath.

"Oh—nothing—nothing, I assure you. 'Tis a little mistake," replied Mr D——, with a faint smile; "I—I thought—in short, I find I've been *dreaming;* and I'm sure I beg pardon for disturbing you." Every one in the coach laughed except Mr D——, whose eyes continued riveted on the dim blue outline of the dog, lying motionless at his feet. He was now certain that he was suffering from an optical illusion of some sort or other, and endeavoured to prevent his thoughts from running

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into an alarmed channel, by striving to engage his faculties with the *philosophy* of the thing. He could make nothing out, however; and the Q.E.D. of his thinkings startled him not a little, when it came in the shape of the large blue dog, leaping at his heels out of the coach, when he alighted. Arrived at home, he lost sight of the phantom during the time of supper and the family devotions. As soon as he had extinguished his bed-room candle, and got into bed, he was nearly leaping out again, on feeling a sensation as if a large dog had jumped on that part of the bed where his feet lay. He *felt* its pressure! He said he was inclined to rise, and make it a subject of special prayer to the Deity! Mrs D—— asked him what was the matter with him? for he became very cold, and shivered a little. He easily quieted her with saying he felt a little chilled; and, as soon as she was fairly asleep, he got quietly out of bed, and walked up and down the room. Wherever he moved, he beheld, by the moonlight through the window, the dim dusky outline of the dog, following wherever he went! Mr D—— opened the windows, he did not exactly know why, and mounted the dressing-table for that purpose. On looking down before he leaped on the floor, there was the dog waiting for him, squatting composedly on his haunches! There was no standing this any longer, thought Mr D——, delusion or no delusion; so he ran to the bed—plunged beneath the clothes, and, thoroughly frightened, dropped at length asleep, his head under cover all night! On waking in the morning, he thought it must have been all a dream about the dog, for it had totally disappeared with the daylight. When an hour's glancing in all directions had convinced him that the phantom was really no longer visible, he told the whole to Mrs D——, and made very merry with her fears—for she would have it, that it was "something supernatural," and, good lady! "Mr ——, might depend upon it, the thing *had its errand!*" Four times subsequent to this did Mr D—— see the spectral visitant—nowise altered either in its manner, form, or colour. It was always late in the evenings when he observed it, and generally when he was alone. He was a man extensively acquainted with physiology; but felt utterly at a loss to what derangement of what part of the animal economy to refer it. So, indeed, was I—for he came to consult me about it. He was with me once during the presence of the phantom. I examined his eyes with a candle, to see whether the interrupted motions of the irides indicated any sudden alteration of the functions of the optic nerve; but the pupils contracted and dilated with perfect regularity. One thing, however, was certain—his stomach had been latterly a little out of order; and everybody knows the intimate connection between its functions and the nervous system. But why he should see spectra—why they should assume and retain the figure of a dog, and of such an uncanine colour too—and why it should so pertinaciously attach itself to him, and be seen precisely the same at the various intervals after which it made its appearance—and why he should hear, or imagine he heard it, utter sounds—all these questions I am as unable to answer as Mr D—— was, or as, possibly, the reader will be. He may account for it in whatever way his ingenuity may enable him. I have seen and known other cases of spectra, not unlike the one above related; and great alarm and horror have they excited in the breasts of persons blessed with less firmness and good sense than Mr D—— displayed.

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A perusal of the foregoing narrative occasioned its corroboration, by the following account of a similar spectrum, seen by one of my scientific friends. As the reader will doubtless consider it interesting, I here subjoin the letter from my friend.

BLACKHEATH, *December* 1830.

MY DEAR SIR,—Though the "Spectral Dog" is somewhat laughable, in quality of tailpiece to the melancholy—the truly sorrowful narrative immediately preceding it, I have read it with nearly equal interest, because it

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forcibly reminds me of a similar incident in my own life.

In my early days I was, as you have often heard me say, an infatuated searcher after the philosopher's stone! I then resided near Bristol, and had a back parlour fitted up according to my fancy, in a very gloomy style. I soon filled it with the apparatus of my craft —crucibles, furnace, retorts, &c., &c., &c., without end. I never allowed the light of day to dissipate the mysterious gloom which pervaded my laboratory; but had an old Roman lamp, suspended from the ceiling, kept continually burning, night and day. I had *three* different locks on the door; and took such precautions as enabled me to satisfy myself that no one ever entered the room for nearly three years, except a singular and enthusiastic old man, who first inspired me with my madness, as I may well call it. *You* know too well, my dear sir, how much of my little fortune was frittered away in running after that ridiculous Will-o'-the-Wisp. But to my tale.

One Sunday evening, after dining hastily at five o'clock, I took my candle in my hand, and hurried back to my laboratory, which I had quitted only half an hour before for dinner. On unlocking the door, and entering, to my equal alarm and astonishment, I distinctly saw the figure of a little old stooping woman in a red cloak, and with a very pale face. She stood near the fireplace, and leaned with both hands on a walking-stick. I was nearly letting fall the candlestick I held. However, I contrived to set it down pretty steadily on the table, which stood between my mysterious guest and me, and *spoke* to her. I received no answer. The figure did not move—nay, it did not even look at me. I stamped with my foot—I knocked my knuckles on the table—I shook it with both my hands—I called out to the old woman —but in vain! A bottle of spirits—brandy, if I recollect right—and a wine-glass, stood on a shelf of the cupboard, which was close at my elbow. I poured out a glassful, and drank it. Still the figure continued there, standing before me as distinct, as motionless as ever. I began to suspect it was merely an ocular spectrum. I rubbed my eyes, I pushed them inward with my fingers, till corruscations of light seemed to flash from them. But when I directed them again towards the spot where the apparition had stood, there it still was! I walked up to her somewhat falteringly. She stood exactly in the way of my arm-chair, as though she were on the point of sitting down upon it. I actually walked clean THROUGH the figure, and sat down. After a few moments, I opened my eyes, which I had closed on sitting down, and behold, the figure stood *fronting* me, about six feet off! I rose—it moved further off; I lifted up my right arm in a threatening manner—so did the figure; I raised my other arm—so did the old woman; I moved towards her—she retreated, all the while never once looking at me. She got towards the spot where I had formerly stood; and so the table was once more between us. I got more agitated than ever; but when the figure began to approach me in a direct line, walking apparently *right through the table*, even as the Israelites through the Red Sea, I quite lost my presence of mind. A giddiness, or sickness, came over me, and, sinking into my seat, I fainted. When I recovered, the spectre had disappeared.

I have never since seen it, nor anything similar. Such spectra are by no means rare among studious men, if of an irritable, nervous temperament, and an imaginative turn. I know a learned baronet who has his study sometimes crowded with them; and he never feels so much at home as when surrounded by these airy spirits!

You may make any use you like of this letter.—I am, my dear sir, ever faithfully yours,

W. G.

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# CHAPTER XI.

## THE FORGER.

A GROOM, in plain livery, left a card at my house, one afternoon during my absence, on which was the name, "MR GLOUCESTER, No. —, REGENT STREET;" and, in pencil, the words, "Will thank Dr —— to call this evening." As my red book was lying on the table at the time, I looked in it, from mere casual curiosity, to see whether the name of "Gloucester" appeared there—but it did not. I concluded, therefore, that my new patient must be a recent comer. About six o'clock that evening, I drove to Regent Street, sent in my card, and was presently ushered by the man-servant into a spacious apartment, somewhat showily furnished. The mild retiring sunlight of a July evening was diffused over the room; and ample crimson window-curtains, half drawn, mitigated the glare of the gilded picture-frames which hung in great numbers round the walls. There was a large round table in the middle of the room, covered with papers, magazines, books, cards, &c.; and, in a word, the whole aspect of things indicated the residence of a person of some fashion and fortune. On a side-table lay several pairs of boxing-gloves, foils, &c. The object of my visit, Mr Gloucester, was seated on an elegant ottoman, in a pensive posture, with his head leaning on his hand, which rested on the table. He was engaged with the newspaper when I was announced. He rose, as I entered, politely—I should rather say obsequiously—handed me to a chair, and then resumed his seat on the ottoman. His countenance was rather pleasing, fresh-coloured, with regular features, and very light auburn hair, which was adjusted with a sort of careless fashionable negligence. I may perhaps be laughed at by some for noticing such an apparently insignificant circumstance; but the observant humour of my profession must sufficiently account for my detecting the fact that his *hands* were not those of a *born and bred* gentleman—of one who, as the phrase is, "has never *done anything*" in his life; but they were coarse, large, and clumsy-looking. As for his demeanour also, there was a constrained and over-anxious display of politeness—an assumption of fashionable ease and indifference, that sat ill on him, like a court dress fastened on a vulgar fellow. He spoke with a would-be jaunty, free-and-easy, small-swagger sort of air, and changed at times the tones of his voice to an offensive cringing softness, which, I daresay, he took to be vastly insinuating. All these little circumstances put together, prepossessed me with a sudden feeling of dislike to the man. These sort of people are a great nuisance to one, since there is no knowing exactly how to treat them. After some hurried expressions of civility, Mr Gloucester informed me that he had sent for me on account of a deep depression of spirits, to which he was latterly subject. He proceeded to detail many of the symptoms of a disordered nervous system. He was tormented with vague apprehensions of impending calamity; could not divest himself of an unaccountable trepidation of manner, which, by attracting observation, seriously disconcerted him on many occasions; felt incessantly tempted to the commission of suicide; loathed society; disrelished his former scenes of amusement; had lost his appetite; passed restless nights; and

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was disturbed with appalling dreams. His pulse, tongue, countenance, &c., corroborated the above statement of his symptoms. I asked him whether anything unpleasant had occurred in his family?—Nothing of the kind. Disappointment in an *affaire du cœur?*—Oh, no. Unsuccessful at play?—By no means—he did not play. Well—had he *any* source of secret annoyance which could account for his present depression? He coloured, seemed embarrassed, and apparently hesitating whether or not he should communicate to me what weighed on his spirits. He, however, seemed determined to keep me in ignorance; and with some alteration of manner, said suddenly, that it was only a constitutional nervousness—his family were all so; and he wished to know whether it was in the power of medicine to relieve him. I replied that I would certainly do all that lay in my power, but that he must not expect any sudden or miraculous effect from the medicines I might prescribe; that I saw clearly he had something on his mind which oppressed his spirits; that he ought to go into cheerful society—he sighed; seek change of air—that, he said, was, under circumstances, impossible. I rose to go. He gave me two guineas, and begged me to call the next evening. I left, not knowing what to make of him. To tell the plain truth, I began to suspect that he was neither more nor less than a systematic London sharper—a gamester—a hanger-on about town—and that he had sent for me in consequence of some of those sudden alternations of fortune to which the lives of such men are subject. I was by no means anxious for a prolonged attendance on him.

About the same time next evening I paid him a second visit. He was stretched on the ottoman, enveloped in a gaudy dressing-gown, with his arms folded on his breast, and his right foot hanging over the side of the ottoman, and dangling about, as if in search of a stray slipper. I did not like this elaborately careless and conceited posture. A decanter or two, with some wine-glasses, stood on the table. He did not rise on my entering, but, with a languid air, begged me to be seated in a chair opposite to him. "Good evening, doctor—good evening," said he, in a low and hurried tone; "I'm glad you are come; for if you had not, I'm sure I don't know what I should have done. I'm deucedly low to-night."

"Have you taken the medicines I prescribed, Mr Gloucester?" I inquired, feeling his pulse, which fluttered irregularly, indicating a high degree of nervous excitement. He had taken most of the physic I had ordered, he said, but without perceiving any effect from it. "In fact, doctor," he continued, starting from his recumbent position to his feet, and walking rapidly three or four paces to and fro—"d—n me if I know what's come to me. I feel as if I could cut my throat." I insinuated some questions, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there was any hereditary tendency to *insanity* in his family; but it would not do. "He saw," he said, "what I was *driving at*," but I was "on a wrong scent."

"Come, come, doctor! after all, there's nothing like *wine* for low spirits, is there? D——e, doctor, drink, drink. Only taste that claret;" and, after pouring out a glass for me, which ran over the brim on the table—his hand was so unsteady—he instantly gulped down two glasses himself. There was a vulgar offensive familiarity in his manner, from which I felt inclined to stand off; but I thought it better to conceal my feelings. I was removing my glove from my right hand, and putting my hat and stick on the table, when, seeing a thin slip of paper lying on the spot where I intended to place them—apparently a bill or promissory-note—I was going to hand it over to Mr Gloucester; but, to my astonishment, he suddenly sprang towards me, snatched from me the paper, with an air of ill-disguised alarm, and crumpled it up into his pocket, saying hurriedly—"Ha, ha, doctor!—this same little bit of paper—didn't see the *name*, eh? 'Tis the bill of an extravagant young friend of mine, whom I've just come down a cool hundred or two for; and

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it wouldn't be the handsome thing to let his name appear—ha—you understand?" He stammered confusedly, directing to me as anxious, sudden, and penetrating a glance as I ever encountered. I felt excessively uneasy, and inclined to take my departure instantly. My suspicions were now confirmed—I was sitting familiarly with a swindler—a gambler—and the bill he was so anxious to conceal was evidently wrung from one of his ruined dupes. My demeanour was instantly frozen over with the most distant and frigid civility. I begged him to be reseated, and allow me to put a very few more questions to him, as I was in great haste. I was thus engaged, when a heavy knock was heard at the outer door. Though there was nothing particular in it, Mr Gloucester started and turned pale. In a few moments I heard the sound of altercation—the door of the room in which we sat was presently opened, and two men entered. Recollecting suddenly a similar scene in my own early history, I felt faint. There was no mistaking the character or errand of the two fellows, who now walked up to where we were sitting; they were two sullen Newgate myrmidons, and—gracious God!—had a warrant to arrest Mr Gloucester for FORGERY! I rose from my chair, and staggered a few paces, I knew not whither. I could scarcely preserve myself from falling on the floor. Mr Gloucester, as soon as he caught sight of the officers, fell back on the ottoman—suddenly pressed his hand to his heart—turned pale as death, and gasped, breathless with horror.

"Gentlemen—what—what do you want here?"

"Isn't your name E—— T——?" asked the elder of the two, coolly and unconcernedly.

"N—o—my name is Glou—ces—ter," stammered the wretched young man, almost inaudibly.

"*Gloucester*, eh?—oh, ho!—none of that there sort of blarney! Come, my kiddy—caged at last, eh? We've been long arter you, and now you must be off with us directly. Here's your passport," said one of the officers, pointing to the warrant. The young man uttered a deep groan, and sank senseless on the sofa. One of the officers, I cannot conceive how, was acquainted with my person; and, taking off his hat, said, in a respectful tone—"Doctor, you'll bring him to his wits again, a'n't please you—we *must* have him off directly!" Though myself but a trifle removed from the state in which he lay stretched before me, I did what I could to restore him, and succeeded at length. I unbuttoned his shirt-collar, dashed in his face some water brought by his man-servant, who now stood looking on, shivering with affright—and endeavoured to calm his agitation by such soothing expressions as I could command.

"Oh, doctor, doctor! what a horrid dream it was!—Are they gone?—are they?" he inquired, without opening his eyes, and clasping my hand in his, which was cold as that of a corpse.

"Come, come—none of these here tantrums—you must *off* at once—that's the long and short of it," said an officer approaching, and taking from his coat-pocket a pair of handcuffs, at sight of which, and of a large horse-pistol projecting from his breast-pocket, my very soul sickened.

"Oh, doctor, doctor!—save me! save me!" groaned their prisoner, clasping my hands with convulsive energy.

"Come—curse your cowardly snivelling!—Why can't you behave like a man, now, eh?—Come!—off with this peacock's covering of yours—it was never made for the like of *you*, I'm sure—and put on a plain coat, and off to cage like a sensible bird," said one of the two, proceeding to remove the dressing-gown very roughly.

"Oh! my God!—oh! my God—have mercy on me!—Oh, strike me dead at once!" nearly shrieked their prisoner, falling on his knees on the floor, and glaring towards the ceiling with an almost maniac eye.

"I hope you'll not treat your prisoner with unnecessary severity," said I, seeing them disposed to be very unceremonious.

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"No—not by no manner of means, if as how he behaves himself," replied one of the men respectfully. Mr Gloucester's dressing-gown was quickly removed, and his body-coat—himself perfectly passive the while—drawn on by his bewildered servant, assisted by one of the officers. It was nearly a new coat, cut in the very extreme of the latest fashion, and contrasted strangely with the disordered and affrighted air of its wearer. His servant placed his hat on his head, and endeavoured to draw on his gloves—showy sky-coloured kid. He was standing with a stupified air, gazing vacantly at the officers, when he started suddenly to the window, manifestly with the intention of leaping out.

"Ha, ha! *that's* your game, my lad, is it?" coolly exclaimed one of the officers, as he snatched him back again with a vicelike grasp of the collar. "Now, since *that's* the sport you're for, why, you must be content to wear these little bracelets for the rest of your journey. It's your own seeking, my lad; for I didn't mean to have used them, if as you'd only behaved peaceably;" and in an instant the young man's hands were locked together in the handcuffs. It was sickening to see the frantic efforts—as if he would have severed his hands from the wrists—he made to burst the handcuffs.

"Take me—to *Hell*, if you choose!" he gasped, in a hoarse, hollow tone, sinking into a chair utterly exhausted, while one of the officers was busily engaged rummaging the drawers, desks, &c., in search of papers. When he had concluded his search, filled his pockets, and buttoned his coat, the two approached, and told him to rise and accompany them.

"Now, covey! are you for a rough or a quiet passage, eh?" said one of them, seizing him not very gently by the collar. He received no answer. The wretched prisoner was more dead than alive.

"I hope you have a hackney-coach in waiting, and don't intend to drag the young man through the streets on foot?" I inquired.

"Why, true, true, doctor—it might be as well for us all; but who's to *stump up* for it?"* replied one of the officers. I gave him five shillings, and the servant was instantly despatched for a hackney-coach. While they were waiting its arrival, conceiving I could not be of any use to Mr Gloucester, and not choosing to be seen leaving the house with two police officers and a handcuffed prisoner, I took my departure, and drove home in such a state of agitation as I have never experienced before or since. The papers of the next morning explained all. The young man "living in Regent Street, in first-rate style," who had summoned me to visit him, had committed a series of forgeries, for the last eighteen months, to a great amount, and with so much secresy and dexterity as to have, till then, escaped detection; and had, for the last few months, been enjoying the produce of his skilful villany in the style I witnessed, passing himself off, in the circles where he associated, under the assumed name of *Gloucester*. The immediate cause of his arrest was forging the acceptance of an eminent mercantile house, to a bill of exchange for £45. Poor fellow! it was short work with him afterwards. He was arraigned at the next September sessions of the Old Bailey—the case clearly proved against him—he offered no defence—was found guilty, and sentenced to death. Shortly after this, while reading the papers one Saturday morning at breakfast, my eye lit on the usual gloomy annunciation of the Recorder's visit to Windsor, and report to the King in Council of the prisoners found guilty at the last Old Bailey Sessions—"all of whom," the paragraph concluded, "his Majesty was graciously pleased to respite during his royal pleasure, except E—— T——, on whom the law is left to take its course next Tuesday morning."

* "'Oui, c'est très bien,' repondit le recors; 'mais qui *bouchera le trou?*'" says the French translator; and adds in a note—"Ang. to *stump up*—Terme d'Argot?" (The forger is called *Edward Werney!*)



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Transient and anything but agreeable as had been my intimacy with this miserable young man, I could not read this intelligence with indifference. He whom I had so very lately seen surrounded with the life-bought luxuries of a man of wealth and fashion, was now shivering the few remaining hours of his life in the condemned cells of Newgate! The next day (Sunday) I entertained a party of friends at my house to dinner; to which I was just sitting down when one of the servants put a note into my hand, of which the following is a copy:—

"The Chaplain of Newgate has been earnestly requested by E—— T—— (the young man sentenced to suffer for forgery next Tuesday morning), to present his humble respects to Dr ——, and solicit the favour of a visit from him in the course of to-morrow, (Monday). The unhappy convict, Mr —— believes, has something on his mind which he is anxious to communicate to Dr ——.

"*Newgate, Sept.* 28, 18—."

I felt it impossible, after perusing this note, to enjoy the company I had invited. What on earth could the culprit have to say to me?—what unreasonable request might he put me to the pain of refusing?—ought I to see him at all?—were questions which I incessantly proposed to myself during the evening, but felt unable to answer. I resolved, however, at last, to afford him the desired interview, and be at the cell of Newgate in the course of the next evening, unless my professional engagements prevented me. About six o'clock therefore, on Monday, after fortifying myself with a few extra glasses of wine—for why should I hesitate to acknowledge that I apprehended much distress and agitation from witnessing so unusual a scene?—I drove to the Old Bailey, drew up opposite the Governor's house, and was received by him very politely. He despatched a turnkey to lead me to the cell where my late patient, the *soi-disant* Mr Gloucester, was immured in chilling expectancy of his fate.

Surely horror has appropriated these gloomy regions for her peculiar dwelling-place! Who that has passed through them once, can ever forget the long, narrow, lamp-lit passages—the sepulchral silence, save where the ear is startled with the clangour of iron doors closing harshly before and behind—the dimly-seen spectral figure of the prison patrol gliding along with loaded blunderbuss—and the chilling consciousness of being surrounded by so many fiends in human shape—inhaling the foul atmosphere of all the concentrated misery and guilt of the metropolis! My heart leaped within me to listen even to my own echoing footfalls; and I felt several times inclined to return without fulfilling the purpose of my visit. My vacillation, however, was abruptly put an end to by my guide exclaiming, "Here we are, sir!" While he was unbarring the cell door, I begged him to continue at the outside during the few moments of my interview with the convict.

"Holloa! young man!—Within there!—Here's Dr —— come to see you!" said the turnkey hoarsely, as he ushered me in. The cell was small and gloomy; and a little lamp, lying on the table, barely sufficed to show me the person of the culprit, and an elderly, respectable-looking man, muffled in drab greatcoat, and sitting gazing in stupified silence on the prisoner. Great God, it was his FATHER! He did not seem conscious of my entrance; but his son rose, and feebly asked me how I was, muttered a few words of thanks, sank again—apparently overpowered by his feelings—into a seat, and fixed his eyes on a page of the Bible, which was lying open before him. A long silence ensued; for none of us seemed either able or inclined to talk. I contemplated the two with feelings of lively interest. How altered was the young culprit before me, from the gay "Mr Gloucester," whom I had visited in Regent Street! His face had now a ghastly, cadaverous hue; his hair was matted with perspiration over his sallow forehead; his eyes were sunk and bloodshot, and seemed incapable of distinguishing the print to which they

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were directed. He was dressed in a plain suit of mourning, and wore a simple black stock round his neck. How I shuddered, when I thought on the rude hands which were soon to unloose it! Beside him, on the table, lay a white pocket-handkerchief, completely saturated, either with tears, or wiping the perspiration from his forehead, and a glass of water, with which he occasionally moistened his parched lips. I knew not whether he was more to be pitied than his wretched, heart-broken father. The latter seemed a worthy, respectable person (he was an industrious tradesman in the country), with a few thin grey hairs scattered over his otherwise bald head, and sat with his hands closed together, resting on his knees, gazing on his doomed son with a lack-lustre eye, which, together with his anguish-worn features, told eloquently of his sufferings!

"Well, doctor!" exclaimed the young man, at length, closing the Bible, "I have now read that blessed chapter to the end; and, I thank God, I think I *feel* it. But now, let me thank you, doctor, for your good and kind attention to my request. I have something particular to say to you, but it must be in private," he continued, looking significantly at his father, as though he wished him to take the hint, and withdraw for a few moments. Alas! the heart-broken parent understood him not, but continued with his eyes riveted, vacantly as before.

"We *must* be left alone for a moment," said the young man, rising and stepping to the door. He knocked, and when it was opened, whispered the turnkey to remove his father gently, and let him wait outside for an instant or two. The man entered for that purpose, and the prisoner took hold tenderly of his father's hand, and said, "Dear—dear father! you must leave me for a moment, while I speak in private to this gentleman;" at the same time endeavouring to raise him from the chair.

"Oh! yes—yes—What?—Of course," stammered the old man, with a bewildered air, rising; and then, as it were with a sudden gush of full returning consciousness, flung his arms round his son, folded him convulsively to his breast, and groaned—"Oh, my son, my poor son!" Even the iron visage of the turnkey seemed darkened with a transient emotion at this heart-breaking scene. The next moment we were left alone; but it was some time before the culprit recovered from the agitation occasioned by the sudden ebullition of his father's feelings.

"Doctor," he gasped at length, "we've but a few—very few moments, and I have much to say. God Almighty bless you," squeezing my hands convulsively, "for this kindness to a guilty unworthy wretch like me; and the business I wanted to see you about is sad, but short. I have heard so much of your goodness, doctor, that I'm sure you won't deny me the only favour I shall ask."

"Whatever is reasonable and proper, if it lie in my way, I shall certainly"—said I, anxiously waiting to see the nature of the communication he seemed to have to make to me.

"Thank you, doctor; thank you. It is only this—in a word—guilty wretch that I am!—I have"—he trembled violently—"seduced a lovely, but poor girl!—God forgive me!—And—and—she is now—nearly on the verge of her *confinement!*" He suddenly covered his face with his handkerchief, and sobbed bitterly for some moments. Presently he resumed—"Alas! she knows me not by my real name; so that when she reads the account of—of—my execution in the papers of Wednesday—she won't know it is *her* Edward! Nor does she know me by the name I bore in Regent Street. She is not at all acquainted with my frightful situation; but she *must* be, when all is over! Now, dear, kind good doctor," he continued, shaking from head to foot, and grasping my hand, "do, for the love of God, and the peace of my dying moments, promise me that you will see her (she lives at ——); visit her in her confinement, and gradually break the news of my death to her, and say my last prayers will be for her, and that my Maker may forgive me for her ruin.

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You will find in this little bag a sum of thirty pounds,—the last I have on earth. I beg you will take five guineas for your own fee, and give the rest to my precious—my ruined Mary!" He fell down on his knees, and folded his arms round mine, in a supplicating attitude. My tears fell on him, as he looked up at me. "Oh, God be thanked for these blessed tears!—they assure me you will do what I ask—may I believe you will?"

"Yes—yes—yes, young man," I replied, with a quivering lip; "it is a painful task; but I will do it—give her the money, and add ten pounds to the thirty, should it be necessary."

"Oh, doctor, depend on it, God will bless you and yours for ever, for this noble conduct!—And now, I have *one* thing more to ask—yes—one thing" —he seemed choked—"Doctor, your skill will enable you to inform me—I wished to know—is—the death I must die to-morrow"—he put his hand to his neck, and, shaking like an aspen leaf, sank down again into the chair from which he had risen—"is hanging —a painful—a tedious"——He could utter no more, nor could I answer him.

"Do not," I replied, after a pause, "do not put me to the torture of listening to questions like these. Pray to your merciful God; and, rely on it, no one ever prayed sincerely in vain. The thief on the cross"—I faltered; then feeling that, if I continued in the cell a moment longer, I should faint, I rose and shook the young man's cold hands; he could not speak, but sobbed and gasped convulsively—and in a few moments I was driving home. As soon as I was seated in my carriage, I could restrain my feelings no longer, but burst into a flood of tears. I prayed to God I might never be called to pass through such a bitter and afflicting scene again, to the latest hour I breathed! I ought to have visited several patients that evening; but, finding myself utterly unfit, I sent apologies and went home. My sleep in the night was troubled; the distorted image of the convict I had been visiting, flitted in horrible shapes round my bed all night long. An irresistible and most morbid restlessness and curiosity took possession of me, to witness the end of this young man. The first time the idea presented itself, it sickened me; I revolted from it. How my feelings changed, I know not; but I rose at seven o'clock, and, without hinting it to any one, put on a greatcoat, slouched my hat over my eyes, and directed my hurried steps towards the Old Bailey. I got into one of the houses immediately opposite the gloomy gallows, and took my station, with several other visitors, at the window. They were conversing on the subject of the execution, and unanimously execrated the sanguinary severity of the laws which could deprive a young man, such as they said E—— T—— was, of his life, for an offence of merely civil criminality. Of course, I did not speak. It was a wretched morning; a drizzling shower fell incessantly. The crowd was not great, but conducted themselves most indecorously. Even the female portion—by far the greater—occasionally vociferated joyously and boisterously, as they recognised their acquaintance among the crowd. At length, St Sepulchre's bell tolled the hour of eight—gloomy herald of many a sinner's entrance into eternity; and as the last chimes died away on the ear, and were succeeded by the muffled tolling of the prison-bell, which I could hear with agonising distinctness, I caught a glimpse of the glistening gold-tipped wands of the two undersheriffs, as they took their station under the shed at the foot of the gallows. In a few moments, the Ordinary, and another grey-haired gentleman, made their appearance; and between them was the unfortunate criminal. He ascended the steps with considerable firmness. His arms were pinioned before and behind; and, when he stood on the gallows, I could hear the exclamations of the crowd—"Lord, Lord! what a fine young man! Poor fellow!" He was dressed in a suit of respectable mourning, and wore black kid gloves. His light hair had evidently been adjusted with some care, and fell in loose curls over each side of his temples.

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His countenance was much as I saw it on the preceding evening—fearfully pale; and his demeanour was much more composed than I had expected, from what I had witnessed of his agitation in the condemned cell. He bowed twice very low, and rather formally; to the crowd around—gave a sudden and ghastly glance at the beam over his head, from which the rope was suspended, and then suffered the executioner to place him on the precise spot which he was to occupy, and prepare him for death. I was shocked at the air of sullen, brutal indifference, with which the hangman loosed and removed his neckerchief, which was white, and tied with neatness and precision—dropped the accursed noose over his head, and adjusted it round the bare—the creeping neck—and could stand it no longer. I staggered from my place at the window to a distant part of the room, dropped into a chair, shut my eyes, closed my tingling ears with my fingers, and, with a hurried aspiration for God's mercy towards the wretched young criminal, who, within a very few yards of me, was perhaps that instant surrendering his life into the hands which gave it, continued motionless for some minutes, till the noise made by the persons at the window, in leaving, convinced me all was over. I rose and followed them down stairs; worked my way through the crowd, without daring to elevate my eyes lest they should encounter the suspended corpse; threw myself into a coach, and hurried home. I did not recover the agitation produced by this scene for several days.—This was the end of a FORGER!

In conclusion, I may just inform the reader, that I faithfully executed the commission with which he had intrusted me, and a bitter, heart-rending business it was!

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# CHAPTER XII.

## A MAN ABOUT TOWN.

[THE *London Medical Gazette* having, in somewhat uncourtly terms, preferred an accusation of plagiarism against the original writer of this Diary—with reference to the citation (in the case "Intriguing and Madness") of the passage from Shakspeare, affirming memory to be the test of madness, ("Bring me to the test," &c.)—asserting, in downright terms, that the illustration in question was "borrowed, without scruple or acknowledgment, from Sir Henry Halford"—and was "truly a little too barefaced;"—the Editor of these Passages simply assures the reader, that, from circumstances, this is *impossible;* and the reader would know it to be so, could these circumstances be communicated consistently with the Editor's present purposes. And further, the Editor immediately wrote to Sir Henry Halford, disproving the truth of the assertion in the *Medical Gazette*, and has received a note from Sir Henry, stating his "perfect satisfaction" with the explanation given. The other allegations contained in the article in question are not such as to require an answer.

LONDON, *November* 12, 1830.]

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I HATE humbug, and would eschew that cant and fanaticism which are at present tainting extensive portions of society, as sincerely as I venerate and

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wish to cultivate a spirit of sober, manly, and rational piety. It is not, therefore, to pander to the morbid tastes of overweening saintliness, to encourage its arrogant assumptions, sanction its hateful, selfish exclusiveness, or advocate that spirit of sour, diseased, puritanical seclusion from the innocent gaieties and enjoyments of life, which has more deeply injured the interests of religion than any of its professed enemies; it is not, I repeat, with any such unworthy objects as these, that this melancholy narrative is placed on record. But it is to show, if it ever meet their eyes, "your men about town," as the *élite* of the rakish fools and flutterers of the day are significantly termed, that some portions of the page of profligacy are black—black with horror, and steeped in the tears—the blood, of anguish and remorse, wrung from ruined thousands! —That often the "iron is entering the very soul" of those who present to the world's eye an exterior of glaring gaiety and recklessness—that gilded guilt *must*, one day, be stripped of its tinselry, and flung into the haze and gloom of outer darkness: *these* are the only objects for which this black passage is laid before the reader; in which I have undertaken to describe pains and agonies which these eyes have witnessed, and that with all the true frightfulness of reality. It has, indeed, cost me feelings of little less than torture to retrace the leading features of the scenes with which the narrative concludes.

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"Hit him—pitch it into him! Go it, boys—go it! Right into your man, each of you, like good 'uns!—Top sawyers, these!—Hurra! Tap his claret cask—draw his cork!—Go it—go it—beat him, big one!—lick him, little one! Hurra!—Slash, smash—fib away—right and left!—Hollo!—Clear the way there!—Ring! ring!"

These, and many similar exclamations, may serve to bring before the reader one of those ordinary scenes in London—a street row; arising, too, out of circumstances of equally frequent recurrence. A gentleman (!) prowling about Piccadilly, towards nightfall, in the month of November, in quest of adventures of a certain description, had been offering some impertinence to a female of respectable appearance, whom he had been following for some minutes. He was in the act of putting his arm round her waist, or taking some similar liberty, when he was suddenly seized by the collar from behind, and jerked off the pavement so violently, that he fell nearly at full length in the gutter. This feat was performed by the woman's husband, who had that moment rejoined her, having quitted her only a very short time before, to leave a message at one of the coach-offices, while she walked on, being in haste. No man of ordinary spirit could endure such rough handling tamely. The instant, therefore, that the prostrate man had recovered his footing, he sprang towards his assailant, and struck him furiously over the face with his umbrella. For a moment the man seemed disinclined to return the blow, owing to the passionate dissuasions of his wife; but it was useless—his English blood began to boil under the idea of submitting to a blow, and hurriedly exclaiming, "Wait a moment, sir,"—he pushed his wife into the shop adjoining, telling her to stay till he returned. A small crowd stood round. "Now, by ——! sir, we shall see which is the better man!" said he, again making his appearance, and putting himself in a boxing attitude. There was much disparity between the destined combatants, in point both of skill and size. The man last named was short in stature, but of a square iron build; and it needed only a glance at his posture to see he was a scientific, perhaps a thorough-bred, bruiser. His antagonist, on the contrary, was a tall, handsome, well-proportioned, gentlemanly man, apparently not more than twenty-eight or thirty years old. Giving his umbrella into the hands of a bystander, and hurriedly drawing off his gloves, he addressed himself to the encounter with an unguarded impetuosity, which left him wholly at the

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mercy of his cool and practised opponent.

The latter seemed evidently inclined to play a while with his man, and contented himself with stopping several heavily-dealt blows, with so much quickness and precision that every one saw "the big one *had caught a Tartar*" in the man he had provoked. Watching his opportunity, like a tiger crouching noiselessly in preparation for the fatal spring, the short man delivered such a slaughtering left-handed hit full in the face of his tall adversary, accompanied by a tremendous "doubling-up" body-blow, as in an instant brought him senseless to the ground. He who now lay stunned and blood-smeared on the pavement, surrounded by a rabble, jeering the fallen "swell," and exulting at seeing the punishment he had received for his impertinence, was, as the conqueror pithily told them, standing over his prostrate foe, the Honourable St John Henry Effingstone, presumptive heir to a marquisate; and the victor, who walked coolly away as if nothing had happened, was Tom ——, the prize-fighter.

Such was the occasion of my first introduction to Mr Effingstone; for I was driving by at the time this occurrence took place—and my coachman, seeing the crowd, slackened the pace of his horses, and I desired him to stop. Hearing some voices cry, "Take him to a doctor," I let myself out, announced my profession, and, seeing a man of very gentlemanly and superior appearance covered with blood, and propped against the knee of one of the people round, I had him brought into my carriage, saying I would drive him to his residence close by, which his card showed me was in —— Street. Though much disfigured, and in great pain, he had not received any injury likely to be attended with danger. He soon recovered; but an infinitely greater annoyance remained after all the other symptoms had disappeared—his left eye was sent into deep mourning, which threatened to last for some weeks; and could anything be more vexatious to a gay man about town? for such was Mr Effingstone—but no ordinary one.

He did not belong to that crowded class of essenced fops, of silly coxcombs, hung in gold chains, and bespangled with a profusion of rings, brooches, pins, and quizzing-glasses, who are to be seen, in fine weather, glistening about town like fireflies in India. *He* was no walking advertisement of the superior articles of his tailor, mercer, and jeweller. No—Mr Effingstone was really *a man about town*, and yet no puppy. He was worse — an abandoned profligate, a systematic debauchee, an irreclaimable reprobate. He stood pre-eminent amidst the throng of men of fashion—a glaring tower of guilt, such as Milton represents Satan,

> In shape and gesture proudly eminent,

among his gloomy battalions of fallen spirits. He had nothing in common with the set of men I have been alluding to, but that he chose to drink deeper from the same foul and maddening cup of dissipation. Their minor fooleries and "naughtiness," as he termed them, he despised. Had he not neglected a legitimate exercise of his transcendent talents, he might have become, with little effort, one of the first men of his age. As for knowledge, his powers of acquisition seemed unbounded. Whatever he read he made his own; good or bad, he never forgot it. He was equally intimate with ancient and modern scholarship. His knowledge of the varieties and distinctions between the ancient sects of philosophers was more minutely accurate, and more successfully brought to bear upon the modern, than I am aware of having ever known in another. Few, very few, that I have been acquainted with, could make a more imposing and effective display of the "dazzling fence of logic." Fallacies, though never so subtle, so exquisitely *vraisemblant* — so "twin-formed to truth"—and calculated to evade the very ghost of Aristotle himself, melted away instantaneously before the first glance of his eye. His powers were acknowledged and feared

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by all who knew him—as many a discomfited sciolist now living can bear testimony. His acuteness of perception was not less remarkable. He anticipated all you meant to convey, before you had uttered more than a word or two. It was useless to kick or wince under such treatment—to find your own words thrust back again down your own throat as useless, than which few things are more provoking to men with the slightest spice of petulance. A conviction of his overwhelming power kept you passive beneath his grasp. He had, as it were, extracted and devoured the kernel, while you were attempting to decide on the best method of breaking the shell. His wit was radiant, and, fed by a fancy both lively and powerful, it flashed and sparkled on all sides of you, like lightning. He had a strong bent towards sarcasm, and that of the bitterest and fiercest kind. If you chanced unexpectedly to become its subject, you sneaked away consciously seared to your very centre. If, however, you really wished to acquire information from him, no one was readier to open the storehouses of his learning. You had but to start a topic requiring elucidation of any kind, and presently you saw, grouped around it, numerous, appropriate, and beautiful illustrations, from almost every region of knowledge. But then you could scarcely fail to observe the spirit of pride and ostentation which pervaded the whole. If he failed anywhere—and who living is equally excellent in all things?—it was in physics. Yes, here he *was* foiled. He lacked the patience, perseverance, and almost exclusive attention, which the cold and haughty goddess presiding over them invariably exacts from her suitors. Still, however, he had that showy general intimacy with its outlines, and some of its leading features, which earned him greater applause than was doled out reluctantly and suspiciously to the profoundest masters of science.

Yet Mr Effingstone, though such as I have described him, gained no distinctions at Oxford; and why? because he knew that all acknowledged his intellectual supremacy: that he had but to extend his foot, and stand on the proudest pedestal of academical eminence. This satisfied him. And another reason for his conduct once slipped out in the course of my intimacy with him: His overweening, I may say almost unparalleled pride, could not brook the idea of the remotest chance of *failure!* The same thing accounted for another manifestation of his peculiar character: No one could conceive how, when, or where, he came by his wonderful knowledge. He never *seemed* to be doing anything; no one ever *saw* him reading or writing, and yet he came into society *au fait* at almost everything! All this was attributable to his pride, or, I should say, more correctly, his vanity. "*Results*, not processes, are for the public eye," he was fond of saying. In plain English, he would shine before men, but would not that they should know the pains and expense with which his lamp was fed. And this highly gifted individual it was who chose to track the waters of dissipation, to career among the sunk rocks, shoals, and quicksands, even till he sank and perished in them! By some strange omission in his moral conformation, his soul seemed utterly destitute of any sympathies for virtue; and whenever I looked at him, it was with feelings of concern, alarm, and wonder, akin to those with which one might contemplate the frightful creature brought into being by Frankenstein. Mr Effingstone seemed either wholly incapable of appreciating moral excellence, or wilfully contemptuous of it. While reflecting carefully on his ἰδιοσυγκρασία, which several years' intimacy gave me many opportunities of doing, and endeavouring to account for his fixed inclination towards vice, and that in its most revolting form and most frantic excesses, at a time when he was consciously possessed of such capabilities of excellence of every description—it has struck me that a little incident, which came to my knowledge casually, afforded a clue to the whole—a key to his character.

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He one day chanced to overhear a distinguished friend of his father's lamenting that a man "of Mr St John's vast powers" could prostitute them in the manner he did; and the reply made by his father was, with a sigh, that "St John was a *splendid* sinner, and he knew it." From that hour, the keystone was fixed in the arch of his unalterable, irreclaimable depravity. He felt a satanic satisfaction in the consciousness of being an object of regret and wonder among those who most enthusiastically acknowledged his intellectual supremacy. How infinitely less stimulating to his morbid sensibilities would be the placid approvals of virtue — a commonplace acquiescence in the ordinary notions of virtue and religion! He wished rather to stand out from the multitude—to be severed from the herd. "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven," he thought, and he was not long in sinking many fathoms lower into the abyss of atheism. In fact, he never pretended to the possession of religious principle; he had acquiesced in the reputed truths of Christianity like his neighbours; or, at least, kept doubts to himself, till he fancied his reputation required him to join the crew of fools who blazon their unbelief. *This was "damned fine."*

Conceive, now, such a man as I have truly, but perhaps imperfectly, described Mr Effingstone—in the possession of £3000 a-year—perfectly his own master—with a fine person and most fascinating manners—capable of acquiring with ease every fashionable accomplishment—the idol, the dictator of all he met—and with a dazzling circle of friends and relatives; conceive, for a moment, such a man as this *let loose upon town!* Will it occasion wonder, if the reader is told how soon nocturnal studies, and the ambition of retaining his intellectual character, which prompted them, were supplanted by a blind, absorbing reckless devotion—for he was incapable of anything but *in extremes*—to the gaming-table, the turf, the cockpit, the ring, the theatres, and daily and nightly attendance on those haunts of detestable debauchery, which I cannot foul my pen with naming?—that a two or three years' intimacy with such scenes as these, had conduced, in the first instance, to shed a haze of indistinctness over the multifarious acquirements of his earlier and better days, and finally to blot out large portions with blank oblivion?—that his soul's sun shone in dim discoloured rays through the fogs—the vault-vapours of profligacy?—that prolonged desuetude was gradually, though unheededly, benumbing and palsying his intellectual faculties?—that a constant "feeding on garbage" had vitiated and depraved his whole system, both physical and mental?—and that, to conclude, there was a lamentable, and almost incredible contrast between the glorious being, Mr Effingstone, at twenty-one, and that poor faded creature, that prematurely superannuated debauchee, Mr Effingstone, at twenty-seven?

I feel persuaded I shall not be accused of travelling out of the legitimate sphere of these "Passages"—of forsaking the tract of professional detail—in having thus attempted to give the reader some faint idea of the intellectual character of one of the most extraordinary young men that have ever flashed, meteor-like, across the sphere of my own observation. Not that, in the ensuing pages, it will be in my power to exhibit him such as he has been described, doing and uttering things worthy of his great powers. Alas! alas! he was "fallen, fallen, fallen" from that altitude long before it became my province to know him professionally. His decline and fall are alone what remain for me to describe. I am painting from the life, and those are living who know it—that I am describing the character and career of him who once lived, but who deliberately immolated himself before the shrine of debauchery—and they can, with a quaking heart, attest the truth of the few bitter and black passages of his remaining history, which here follow.

The reader is acquainted with the circumstances attending my first pro-

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fessional acquaintance with Mr Effingstone. Those of the second are in perfect keeping. He had been prosecuting an enterprise of *seduction*, the interest of which was, in his eyes, enhanced a thousand-fold, on discovering that the object of his illicit attentions was married. She was, I understood, a very handsome, fashionable woman; and she fell, for Mr Effingstone was irresistible! He was attending one of their assignations one night, which she was unexpectedly unable to keep; and he waited so long at the place of meeting, but slightly clad, in the cold and inclement weather, that when he returned home at an early hour in the morning, intensely chagrined, he began to feel ill. He could not rise to breakfast. He grew rapidly worse; and when I was summoned to his bedside, he exhibited all the symptoms of a very severe inflammation of the lungs. One or two concurrent causes of excitement and chagrin aggravated his illness. He had been very unfortunate in betting on the Derby; and was threatened with an arrest from his tailor, to whom he owed some hundreds of pounds, which he could not possibly pay. Again—a wealthy remote member of the family, his godfather, having heard of his profligacy, altered his will, and left every farthing he had in the world, amounting to upwards of fifty or sixty thousand pounds, to a charitable institution, the whole of which had been originally destined to Mr Effingstone. The only notice taken of him in the old gentleman's will was, "To St John Henry Effingstone, my unworthy godson, I bequeath the sum of five pounds sterling, to purchase a Bible and Prayer-book, believing the time may yet come when he will require them."—These circumstances, I say, added to one or two other irritating concomitants, such as will sometimes succeed in stinging even your *men about town* into something like reflection, brief, bitter, and futile though it be, contributed to accelerate the inroads of his dangerous disorder. We were compelled to adopt such powerful antiphlogistic treatment as reduced him to within an inch of his life. Previous to, and in the course of, this illness, he exhibited one or two characteristic traits.

"Doctor—is delirium usually an attendant on this disorder?" he inquired one morning. I told him it was—very frequently.

"Ah! then, I'd better become ἄγλωσσος, with one of old, and bite out my tongue; for, God knows! my life won't bear ripping up! I shall say what will horrify you all! Delirium blackens a poor fellow sadly among his friends, doesn't it? Babbling devil—what can silence it? If you should hear me beginning to *let out*, suffocate me—do, doctor."

"Any chance of my giving the GREAT CUT this time, doctor, eh?" he inquired the same evening, with great apparent nonchalance. Seeing my puzzled air—for I did not exactly comprehend the expression "great cut"—he asked quickly, "Doctor, shall I die, d'ye think?" I told him I certainly apprehended great danger, for his symptoms began to look very serious. "Then the ship must be cleared for action. What is the best way of insuring recovery, provided it is *to be?*" I told him that, among other things, he must be kept very quiet—must not have his mind excited by visitors.

"Nurse, ring the bell for George," said he, suddenly interrupting me. The valet, in a few moments, answered the summons. "George, d'ye value your neck, eh?" The man bowed. "Then, harkee, see you don't let in a living soul to see me, except the medical people. Friends, relatives, mother, brothers, sisters—harkee, sirrah! shut them all out—And, *duns*—mind—duns especially. If —— should come, and get inside the door, kick him out again; and if —— comes, and ——, and ——, tell them, that if they don't mind what they are about, I'll die, if it's only to cheat them." The man bowed and retired. "And—and—doctor, what else?"

"If you should appear approaching your end, Mr Effingstone, you would allow us, perhaps, to call in a clergyman to assist you in your devo"——

"What—eh—a parson? Oh, ——

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it! no, no—out of the question—*non ad rem*, I assure you," he replied hastily. "D'ye think I can't roll down to hell fast enough, without having my wheels oiled by *their* hypocritical humbug? Don't name it again, doctor, on any account, I beg."

* * * He grew rapidly worse, but ultimately recovered. His injunctions were obeyed to the letter; for his man George idolised his master, and turned a deaf ear to *all* applications for admission to his master's chamber. It was well there was no one of his friends or relatives present to listen to his ravings; for the disgorgings of his polluted soul were horrible. His progress towards convalescence was by very slow steps; for the energies of both mind and body had been dreadfully shaken. His illness, however, had worked little or no alteration in his moral sentiment—or if anything, for the worse.

"It won't do at all, will it, doctor?" said Mr Effingstone, when I was visiting him one morning at the house of a titled relation in —— Square, whither he had been removed to prepare for a jaunt to the Continent. "What do you allude to, Mr Effingstone?—*What* won't do?" I asked, for I knew not to what he alluded, as the question was the first break of a long pause in our conversation, which had been quite of a miscellaneous character. "*What* won't do?"—"Why, the sort of life I have been leading about town these two or three last years," he replied. "Egad! doctor, it has nearly wound me up, has not it?"

"Indeed, Mr Effingstone, I think so. You have had a very, very narrow escape—have been within a hair's-breadth of your grave."—"Ay!" he exclaimed, with a sigh, passing his hand rapidly over his noble forehead, "'twas a complete *toss up* whether I should go or stay! I look somewhat shaken—*une roue qui se déraye*—do I not, faith?—But come, come, the good ship has weathered the storm bravely, though she *has* been battered a little in her timbers!" said he, striking his breast: "and she's fit for sea again already—with a little caulking, that is. Heigho! what a fool illness makes a man! I've had some of the strangest, oddest twingings—such gleams and visions! What d'ye think, doctor, I've had dinging in my ears night and day, like a dismal church bell? Why, a passage from old Persius, and this is it (you know I was a *dab* at Latin, once, doctor), *rotundo ore*—

Magne Pater divum! sævos punire tyrannos
Haud aliâ ratione velis, quum dira libido
Moverit ingenium, ferventi tincta veneno;
—Virtutem videant—intabescantque relicta!*

True and forcible enough, isn't it?"

"Yes," I replied; and expressed my satisfaction at his altered sentiments. "He might rely on it," I ventured to assure him, "that the paths of virtue, of religion"—I was getting on too fast.

"Poh, poh, doctor! No humbug, I beg—come, come, no humbug—no nonsense of that sort! I meant nothing of the kind, I can assure you! I'm a better Bentley than you, I see! What d'ye think is *my* reading of '*virtutem videant?*'—Why, let them get wives when they're worn out, and want nursing—ah, ha!—Curse me!—I'd go on raking—ay, I would, stern as you look about it!—but I'm too much the worse for wear at present—I must recruit a little."

"Mr Effingstone, I am really confounded at hearing you talk in so light a strain! Forgive me, my dear sir, but"——

"Fiddle-de-dee, my dear doctor! Of course, I'll forgive you, if you won't repeat the offence. 'Tis unpleasant—a nuisance—'*tis*, upon my soul! Well, however, what do you think is the upshot of the whole—the practical point—the winding-up of affairs—the balancing of the books"—he delighted in accumulations of this sort—"the shutting up of the volume, eh? I'm going to get married—I am by ——! I'm at dead low-water mark in money matters; and, in short, I repeat it, I intend to marry—a gold bag! A good move, isn't it? But, to be candid, I

* Pers. *Sat.* iii.

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can't take all the credit of the thing to myself either, having been a trifle bored, bullied, *badgered* into it by the family. They say the world cries shame on me! Simpletons, why listen to the world!—I only laugh, ha, ha, ha! and cry curse on the world; and so we are quits with one another!* —By the way, the germ of that's to be found in that worthy old fellow Plautus!"

All this, uttered with Mr Effingstone's characteristic emphasis and rapidity of tone and manner, conveyed his real sentiments; and it was not long before he carried them into effect. He spent two or three months in the south of France; and not long after his return to England, with restored health and energies, he singled out, from among the many, many women who would have exulted in being an object of the attentions of the accomplished, the *distingué* Effingstone, Lady E—— ——, the very flower of English aristocratical beauty, daughter of a distinguished peer, and sole heiress to the immense estates of an aged baronet in ———shire.

The unceasing exclusive attentions exacted from her suitor by this haughty young beauty, operated for a while as a salutary check upon Mr Effingstone's reviving propensities to dissipation. So long as there was the most distant possibility of his being rejected, he was her willing slave at all hours, on all occasions, yielding implicit obedience, and making incessant sacrifices of his own personal conveniences. As soon, however, as he had "run down the game," as he called it, and the lady was so far compromised, in the eyes of the world, as to render retreat next to impossible, he began to slacken in his attentions; not, however, so palpably and visibly as to alarm either her ladyship, or any of their mutual relations or friends. He compensated for the attentions he was obliged to pay her by day, by the most extravagant nightly excesses. The pursuits of intellect, of literature, and philosophy, were utterly, and apparently finally discarded—and for what? For wallowing swinishly in the foulest sinks of depravity, herding among the acknowledged outcasts, commingling intimately with the very scum and refuse of society, battening on the rottenness of obscenity, and revelling amid the hellish orgies celebrated nightly in haunts of nameless infamy. Gambling, gluttony, drunkenness, harlotry, blasphemy!—

* * * *

[I cannot bring myself to make public the shocking details with which the following five pages of Dr ——'s Diary are occupied. They are too revolting for the columns of this distinguished Magazine, and totally unfit for the eyes of its miscellaneous readers. If printed, they would appear to many absolutely incredible. They are little else than a corroboration of what is advanced in the sentences immediately preceding this interjected paragraph. What follows must be given only in a fragmentary form—the cup of horror must be poured out before the reader, only κατὰ σταγόνα.*]

Mr Effingstone, one morning, accompanied Lady E—— and her mother to one of the fashionable shops, for the purpose of aiding the former in her choice of some beautiful Chinese toys, to complete the ornamental department of her boudoir. After having purchased some of the most splendid and costly articles which had been exhibited, the ladies drew on their gloves, and gave each an arm to Mr Effingstone to lead them to the carriage. Lady E—— was in a flutter of unusually animated spirits, and was complimenting Mr Effingstone, in enthusiastic terms, on the taste with which he had guided their purchases. They had left the shop door, and the

[* "What are the thousands that have been laughing at us, but company?"—"Laard, my dear," returned he with the greatest good-humour, "you seem immensely chagrined; but, b——t me! *when the world laughs at me, I laugh at all the world—and so we are even.*"—CITIZEN OF THE WORLD—LETTER LIV.

It is said that the germ of the observation in the text is "to be found in *Plautus*." I do not recollect it *there:* possibly Effingstone had some indistinct recollection of this passage from Goldsmith.—ED.]

* *Alex. in Aphrodisio.*

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footman was letting down the carriage steps, when a very young woman, elegantly dressed, who happened to be passing at that moment, seemingly in a state of deep dejection, suddenly started on seeing and recognising Mr Effingstone, placed herself between them and the carriage, and, lifting her clasped hands, exclaimed, in piercing accents, "Oh, Henry, Henry, Henry! how cruelly you have deserted your poor ruined girl! What have I done to deserve it! I'm broken-hearted, and can rest nowhere! I've been walking up and down M—— Street nearly three hours this morning to get a sight of you, but could not! Oh, Henry, how differently you said you would behave before you brought me up from ———shire!" All this was uttered with the impassioned vehemence and rapidity of highly excited feelings, and uninterruptedly; for both Lady E—— and her mother seemed perfectly petrified, and stood pale and speechless. Mr Effingstone, too, was for a moment thunderstruck; but an instant's reflection showed him the necessity of acting with decision one way or another. Though deadly pale, he did not disclose any other symptom of agitation; and with an assumed air of astonishment and irrecognition, exclaimed concernedly, "Poor creature! unfortunate thing! Some strange mistake this!"

"Oh, no, no, no, Henry, it's no mistake! You know me well enough—I'm your own poor Hannah!"

"Poh, poh! nonsense, woman; *I* never saw you before."

"Never saw me! never saw me!" almost shrieked the girl; "and is it come to this?"

"Woman, don't be foolish—cease, or we must give you over to an officer as an impostor," said Mr Effingstone, the perspiration bursting from every pore. "Come, come, your ladyships had better allow me to hand you into the carriage. See, there's a crowd collecting."

"No, Mr Effingstone," replied Lady E——'s mother with excessive agitation; "this very singular, strange affair—if it *is* a mistake—had better be set right on the spot. Here, young woman, can you tell me what is the name of this gentleman?" pointing to Mr Effingstone.

"Effingstone — Effingstone, to be sure, ma'am," sobbed the girl, looking imploringly at him. The instant she had uttered his name, the two ladies, dreadfully agitated, withdrew their arms from his, and, with the footman's assistance, stepped into their carriage, and drove off rapidly, leaving Mr Effingstone bowing, kissing his hand, and assuring them that he should "soon settle this absurd affair," and be at —— Street before their ladyships. They heard him not, however; for the instant the carriage had set off, Lady E—— fainted.

"Young woman, you're quite mistaken in me—I never saw you before. Here is my card—come to me at eight to-night," he added, in an under tone, so as to be heard by none but her he addressed. She took the hint, appeared pacified, and each withdrew different ways — Mr Effingstone almost suffocated with suppressed execrations. He flung himself into a hackney coach, and ordered it to —— Street, intending to assure Lady E——, with a smile, that he had "instantly put an end to the ridiculous affair." His knock, however, brought him a prompt "Not at home," though their carriage had but the instant before driven from the door. He jumped again into the coach, almost gnashing his teeth with fury, drove home, and despatched his groom with a note, and orders to wait an answer. He soon brought it back, with the intelligence that Lord and Lady —— had given their porter orders to reject all letters or messages from Mr Effingstone! So there was an end of all hopes from *that* quarter. This is the history of what was mysteriously hinted at in one of the papers of the day, as a "strange occurrence in high life, which would probably break off a matrimonial affair long considered as settled." But how did Mr Effingstone receive his ruined dupe at the appointed hour of eight? He answered her expected knock himself.

"Now, look, ——!" said he fiercely,

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extending his arm with clenched fist towards her, "if ever you presume to darken my door again, by ——, I'll murder you! I give you fair warning. You've ruined me—you have, you accursed ——!"

"Oh, my God! What am I to do to live? What is to become of me?" groaned the victim.

"Do? Why, go and be ——! And here's something to help you on your way — there!" and, flinging her a cheque for £50, he shut the door violently in her face.

Mr Effingstone now plunged into profligacy with a spirit of almost diabolical desperation. Divers dark hints —stinging innuendoes—appeared in the papers of his disgraceful notoriety in certain scenes of an abominable description. But he laughed at them. His family at length cast him off, and refused to recognise him till he chose to alter his courses — to make the "*amende*" to society.

Mr Effingstone was boxing one morning with Belasco—I think it was —at the latter's rooms; and was preparing to plant a hit which the fighter had defied him to do, when he suddenly dropped his guard, turned pale, and, in a moment or two, fell fainting into the arms of the astounded boxer. He had, several days previously, suspected himself the subject of indisposition—how could it be otherwise, keeping such hours, and living such a life as he did?—but not of so serious a nature as to prevent him from going out as usual. As soon as he had recovered, and swallowed a few drops of spirits and water, he drove home, intending to have sent immediately for Mr ——, the well-known surgeon; but, on arriving at his rooms, he found a travelling carriage-and-four waiting before the door, for the purpose of conveying him instantly to the bedside of his dying mother, in a distant part of England, as she wished personally to communicate to him something of importance before she died. This he learned from two of his relatives who were up-stairs giving directions to his servant to pack up his clothes, and make other preparations for his journey, so that nothing might detain him from setting off the instant he arrived at his rooms. He was startled—alarmed —confounded at all this. Good God! he thought, what was to become of him? He was utterly unfit to undertake a journey, requiring instant medical attendance, which had been too long deferred; for his dissipation had already made rapid inroads on his constitution. Yet what was to be done? His situation was such as could not be communicated to his relatives, for he did not choose to encounter their sarcastic reproaches. He had nothing for it but to get into the carriage with them, go down to ———shire, and, when there, devise some plausible pretext for returning instantly to town. That, however, he found impracticable. His mother would not trust him out of her sight one instant, night or day, but kept his hand close locked in hers; he was also surrounded by the congregated members of the family, and could literally scarce stir out of the house an instant. He dissembled his illness with tolerable success, till his aggravated agonies drove him almost beside himself. Without breathing a syllable to any one but his own man, whom he took with him, he suddenly left the house, and, without even a change of clothes, threw himself into the first London coach; and, by two o'clock the next day, was at his own rooms in M—— Street, in a truly deplorable condition, and attended by Sir —— and myself. The consternation of his family in ———shire may be conceived. He coined some story about being obliged to stand second in a duel —but his real state was soon discovered. Nine weeks of unmitigated agony were passed by Mr Effingstone —the virulence of his disorder for a long time setting at defiance all that medicine could do. This illness, also, broke him down sadly, and we recommended to him a second sojourn in the south of France—for which he set out the instant he could undertake the journey with safety. Much of his peculiar character was developed in this illness; that haughty, reckless

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spirit of defiance—that contemptuous disregard of the sacred consolations of religion—that sullen indifference as to the event which might await him—which his previous character would have warranted me in predicting.

* * * *

About seven months from the period last mentioned, I received, one Sunday evening, a note, written in hurried characters; and a hasty glance at the seal, which bore Mr Effingstone's crest, filled me with sudden vague apprehensions that some misfortune or other had befallen him. This was the note:—

"Dear doctor—For God's sake, come and see me immediately, for I have this day arrived in London from the Continent, and am suffering the tortures of the damned, both in mind and body. Come, come—in God's name come instantly, or I shall go mad, or destroy myself. Not a word of my return *to any one* till I have seen you. You will find me—in short, my man will accompany you.—Yours in agony,

"Sr J. H. Effingstone.

"*Sunday Evening, Nov.* 18—."

Tongue cannot utter the dismay with which this note filled me. His unexpected return from abroad—the obscure and distant part of the town (St George's in the East) where he had established himself—the dreadful terms in which his note was couched—revived, amidst a variety of vague conjectures, certain fearful apprehensions for him which I had begun to entertain before he quitted England. I ordered out my chariot instantly; his groom mounted the box to guide the coachman, and we drove down rapidly. A sudden recollection of the contents of several of the letters he had sent me latterly from the Continent, at my request, served to corroborate my worst fears. I had given him over for lost, by the time my chariot drew up opposite the house where he had so strangely taken up his abode. The street and neighbourhood, though not clearly discernible through the fogs of a November evening, contrasted strangely with the aristocratical regions to which my patient had been accustomed. —— Row was narrow, and the houses were small, yet clean and creditable looking. On entering No. —, the landlady, a person of quiet respectable appearance, told me that *Mr Hardy*—for such, it seems, was the name he chose to go by in these parts—had just retired to rest, as he felt fatigued and poorly, and she was just going to make him some gruel. She spoke in a tone of flurried excitation, and with an air of doubt, which were easily attributable to her astonishment at a man of Mr Effingstone's appearance and attendance, with such superior travelling equipments, dropping into such a house and neighbourhood as hers. I repaired to his bedchamber immediately. It was a small comfortably furnished room; the fire was lit, and two candles were burning on the drawers. On the bed, the plain chintz curtains of which were only half-drawn, lay St John Henry Effingstone. I must pause a moment to describe his appearance, as it struck me at first looking at him. It may be thought rather far-fetched, perhaps, but I could not help comparing him, in my own mind, to a gem set in the midst of faded tarnished embroidery. The coarse texture of the bed-furniture, the ordinary style of the room, its constrained dimensions contrasted strikingly with the indications of elegance and fashion afforded by the scattered clothes, toilet, and travelling equipment, &c.—together with the person and manners—of its present occupant, who lay on a bed all tossed and tumbled, with only a few minutes' restlessness. A dazzling diamond ring sparkled on the little finger of his left hand, and was the only ornament he ever wore. There was something also in the snowiness, simplicity, and fineness of his linen, which alone might have evidenced the superior consideration of its wearer, even were that not sufficiently visible in the noble, commanding outline of his features, faded though they were, and shrinking beneath the inroads of illness and dissipation. His forehead was white and ample; his eye had lost none of its fire, though it gleamed with restless

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energy; in a word, there was that ease and loftiness in his bearing—that indescribable *manière d'être*—which are inseparable from high birth and breeding. So much for the appearance of things on my entrance.

"How are you, Mr Effingstone—how are you, my dear sir?" said I, sitting down by the bedside.

"Doctor—the pains of hell have got hold upon me. I am undone," he replied gloomily, in a broken voice, and extended to me a hand cold as marble.

"Is it as you suspected in your last letter to me from Rouen, Mr Effingstone?" I inquired after a pause. He shook his head, and covered his face with both hands, but made me no answer. Thinking he was in tears, I said, in a soothing tone—"Come, come, my dear sir, don't be carried away: don't"—

"Faugh! Do you take me for a puling child, or a woman, doctor? Don't suspect me again of such contemptible pusillanimity, low as I am fallen," he replied, with startling sternness, removing his hands from his face.

"I hope, after all, that matters are not so desperate as your fears would persuade you," said I, feeling his pulse.

"Doctor, don't delude me; all is over. I know it is. A horrible death is before me; but I shall meet it like a man. I have made my bed, and must lie upon it. I have not only strewn, but lit the pile of my own immolation!"

"Come, come, Mr Effingstone, don't be so gloomy—so hopeless; the exhausted powers of nature *may* yet be revived," said I, after having asked him many questions.

"Doctor ——, I'll soon put an end to that strain of yours. 'Tis absurd—pardon me—but it *is*. Reach me one of those candles, please." I did so. "Now, I'll show you how to translate a passage of Persius:—

Tentemus fauces:—*tenero latet ulcus in ore*
*Putre*, quod haud deceat plebeia radere beta!

"Eh, you recollect it? Well, look!—what say you to this; isn't it frightful?" he asked bitterly, raising the candle that I might look into his mouth. It was, alas, as he said! In fact, his whole constitution had been long tainted, and exhibited symptoms of soon breaking up altogether. I feared, from the period of my attendance on him during the illness which drove him last to the Continent, that it was beyond human power to dislodge the harpy that had fixed its cruel fangs deeply, inextricably, in his vitals. Could it be wondered at even by himself? Neglect, in the first instance, added to a persevering course of profligacy, had doomed him, long, long before, to premature and horrible decay! And though it can scarcely be credited, it is nevertheless the fact, that even on the Continent, in the character of a shattered invalid, the infatuated man resumed those dissolute courses which, in England, had already hurried him almost to death's door!

"My good God, Mr Effingstone," I inquired, almost paralysed with amazement at hearing him describe recent scenes in which he had mingled, which would have made even satyrs skulk ashamed into the woods of old, "how *could* you have been so insane—so stark staring mad, to say nothing else of it?"

"By instinct, doctor—by instinct! The *nature* of the beast!" he replied, through his closed teeth, and with an unconscious clenching of his hands. Many inquiries into his past and present symptoms forewarned me that his case would probably be marked by more appalling features than any that had ever come under my care; and that there was not a ray of hope that he would survive the long, lingering, and maddening agonies, which were "measured out to him from the poisoned chalice," which he had "commended to his own lips." At the time I am speaking of—I mean when I paid him the visit above described—his situation was not far from that of Job, described in chap. xx.

* * * *

He shed no tears, and repeatedly strove, but in vain, to repress sighs with which his breast heaved, nearly to bursting, while I pointed out, in obedience to his determination, to know the worst, some portions of the dreary prospect before him.

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"Horrible! hideous!" he exclaimed, in a low broken tone, his flesh creeping from head to foot. "*How* shall I endure it!—Oh! Epictetus, how?" He relapsed into silence, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, and his hands joined over his breast, and pointing upwards, in a posture which I considered supplicatory. I rejoiced to see it, and ventured to say, after much hesitation, that I was delighted to see him at length looking to the right quarter for support and consolation.

"Bah!" he exclaimed impetuously, removing his hands, and eyeing me with sternness, almost approaching fury, "*why* will you persist in pestering your patients with twaddle of that sort?—*eandem semper canens cantilenam, ad nauseam usque*—as though you carried a psalter in your pocket? When I want to listen to anything of that kind, why, I'll pay a parson! Haven't I a tide enough of horror to bear up against already, without your bringing a sea of superstition upon me? No more of it—no more—'tis foul." I felt roused myself, at last, to something like correspondent emotion; for there was an insolence of assumption in his tone which I could not brook.

"Mr Effingstone," said I calmly, "this silly swagger will not do. 'Tis unworthy of you—unscholarly—ungentlemanly. You *force* me to say so. I beg I may hear no more of it, or you and I must part. I have never been accustomed to such treatment, and I cannot now learn how to endure it from you. From what quarter can you expect support or fortitude," said I, in a milder tone, seeing him startled and surprised at my tone and manner, "except the despised consolations of religion?"

"Doctor, you are too superior to petty feelings not to overlook a little occasional petulance in such a wretched fellow as I am! You ask me whither I look for support? I reply, to the energies of my own mind—the tried, disciplined energies of my own mind, doctor—a mind that never knew what fear was—that no disastrous combinations of misfortune could ever yet shake from its fortitude! What but *this* is it, that enables me to shut my ears to the whisperings of some pitying fiend, who, knowing what hideous tortures await me, has stepped out of hell to come and advise me to *suicide*—eh?" he inquired, his eye glaring on me with a very fearful expression. "However, as religion, that is, your Christian religion, is a subject on which you and I can never agree—an old bone of contention between us—why, the less said about it the better. It's useless to irritate a man whose mind is made up—I shall *never*—I *will* never—be a believer. May I perish first!" he concluded, with angry vehemence.

The remainder of the interview I spent in endeavouring to persuade him to relinquish his present unsuitable lodgings, and return to the sphere of his friends and relations—but in vain. He was fixedly determined to continue in that obscure hole, he said, till there was about a week or so between him and death, and then he would return, "and die in the bosom of his family, as the phrase was." Alas! however, I knew but too well, that, in the event of his adhering to that resolution, he was fated to expire in the bed where he then lay; for I foresaw but too truly that the termination of his illness would be attended with circumstances rendering removal utterly impossible. He made me pledge my word that I would not, without his express request or sanction, apprise any member of his family, or any of his friends, that he had returned to England. It was in vain that I expostulated—that I represented the responsibility imposed upon me; and reminded him, that, in the event of anything serious and sudden befalling him, the censure of all his relatives would be levelled at me. He was immovable. "Doctor, you know well I dare not see them, as well on my own account as theirs," said he bitterly. He begged me to prescribe him a powerful anodyne draught; for that he could get no rest at nights—that an intense, racking pain was gnaw-



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ing all his bones from morning to evening—from evening to morning: and what with this and other dreadful concomitants, he "was," he said, "suffering the tortures of the damned, and perhaps worse." I complied with his request, and ordered him also many other medicines and applications, and promised to see him soon in the morning. I was, accordingly, with him about twelve the next day. He was sitting up, and in his dressing-gown, before the fire, in great pain, and suffering under the deepest dejection. He complained heavily of the intense and unremitting agony he had endured all night long, and thought that, from some cause or other, the laudanum draught I ordered had tended to make him only more acutely sensible of the pain. "It is a peculiar and horrible sensation; and I cannot give you an adequate idea of it," he said: "it is as though the marrow in my bones were transformed into something animated—into blind-worms, writhing, biting, and stinging incessantly"—and he shuddered, as did I also, at the revolting comparison. He put me upon a minute exposition of the *rationale* of his disorder; and if ever I was at a loss for adequate expressions or illustrations, he supplied them with a readiness, an exquisite appositeness, which, added to his astonishing acuteness in comprehending the most strictly technical details, filled me with admiration for his great powers of mind, and poignant regret at their miserable desecration.

"Well, I don't think you can give me any efficient relief, doctor," said he; "and I am, therefore, bent on trying a scheme of my own."

"And what, pray, may that be?" I inquired curiously, with a sigh.

"I'll tell you my preparations. I've ordered—by ——!—nearly a hundredweight of the strongest tobacco that's to be bought, and thousands of pipes; and with these I intend to smoke myself into stupidity, or rather insensibility, if possible, till I can't undertake to say whether I live or not; and my good fellow, George, is to be reading me Don Quixote the while." Oh, with what a sorrowful air of forced gaiety was all this uttered!

One sudden burst of bitterness I well recollect. I was saying, while putting on my gloves to go, that I hoped to see him in better spirits the next time I called.

"Better spirits! Ha! ha! How the —— can I be in better spirits—an exile from society—and absolutely *rotting* away here—in such a contemptible hovel as this, among a set of base-born brutal savages?—faugh! faugh! It *does* need something here—here," pressing his hand to his forehead, "to bear it—ay, it does!" I thought his tones were tremulous, and that for the first time I had ever known them so; and I could not help thinking the tears came into his eyes, for he started suddenly from me, and affected to be gazing at some passing object in the street. I saw he was beginning to droop under a consciousness of the bitter degradation into which he had sunk—the wretched prospect of his sun's going down at noon—and in darkness! I saw that the strength of mind to which he clung so pertinaciously for support, was fast disappearing, like snow beneath the sunbeam. * * *

[Then follow the details of his disease, which are so shocking as to be unfit for any but professional eyes. They represent all the energies of his nature as shaken beyond the possibility of restoration—his constitution thoroughly polluted—wholly undermined. That the remedies resorted to had been almost more dreadful than the disease—and yet exhibited in vain! In the next twenty pages of the Diary, the shades of horror are represented as gradually closing and darkening around this wretched victim of debauchery; and the narrative is carried forward through three months. A few extracts only, from this portion, are fitting for the reader.]

*Friday, January* 5.—Mr Effingstone continues in the same deplorable state described in my former entry. It is absolutely revolting to enter his room, the effluvia is so sickening, so overpowering. I am compelled to use a

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vinaigrette incessantly, as well as eau-de-cologne, and other scents, in profusion. I found him engaged, as usual, deep in *Petronius Arbiter!* He still makes the same wretched show of reliance on the strength and firmness of his mental powers; but his worn and haggard features—the burning brilliance of his often half-frenzied eyes—the broken, hollow tones of his voice—his sudden starts of apprehension—belie every word he utters. He describes his bodily sufferings as frightful. Indeed, Mrs —— has often told me, that his groans both disturb and alarm the neighbours, even as far as on the other side of the street! The very watchman has several times been so much startled in passing, at hearing his groans, that he has knocked at the door to inquire about them. Neither Sir —— nor I can think of anything that seems likely to assuage his agonies. Even laudanum has failed us altogether, though it has been given in unprecedented quantities. I think I can say, with truth and sincerity, that scarce the wealth of the Indies should tempt me to undertake the management of another such case. I am losing my appetite — loathe animal food — am haunted day and night by the piteous spectacle which I have to encounter daily in Mr Effingstone. Oh! that Heaven would terminate his tortures —surely he has suffered enough! I am sure he would hail the prospect of death with ecstasy!

*Wednesday*, 10.—Poor, infatuated, obstinate Effingstone, will not yet allow me to communicate with any of his family or friends, though he knows they are almost distracted at not hearing from him, fancying him yet abroad. Colonel —— asked me the other day, earnestly, when I last heard from Mr Effingstone! I wonder my conscious looks did not betray me. I almost wish they had. Good God! in what a painful predicament I am placed! What am I to do? Shall I tell them all about him, and disregard consequences? Oh—no—no! how can that be, when my word and honour are solemnly pledged to the contrary?

*Saturday*, 20.—Poor Effingstone has experienced a signal instance of the ingratitude and heartlessness of mere men of the world. He sent his man, some time ago, with a confidential note to Captain ——, formerly one of his most intimate acquaintances, stating briefly the shocking circumstances in which he is placed, and begging him to call and see him. The captain sent back a *vivâ voce* (!) message, that he should feel happy in calling on Mr Effingstone in a few days' time, and would then, but that he was busy making up a match at billiards, and balancing his betting-book, &c. &c. &c.! This day the fellow rode up to the door, and—*left a card for Mr Effingstone, without asking to see him!* Heartless, contemptible thing! — I drove up about a quarter of an hour after this *gentleman* had left. Poor Effingstone could not repress tears while informing me of the above. "Would you believe it, doctor," said he, "that Captain —— was one of my most intimate companions—that he has won very many hundred pounds of my money—and that I have stood his second in a duel?" "Oh, yes—I could believe it all, and much more!"

"My poor man, George," he resumed, "is worth a million of such puppies! Don't you think the good, faithful fellow looks ill? He is at my bedside twenty times a night! Pray, try and do something for him! I've left him a trifling annuity out of the wreck of my fortune, poor fellow!" and the rebellious tears again glistened in his eyes. His tortures are unmitigated.

*Friday*, 26.—Surely, surely, I have never seen, and seldom heard or read, of such sufferings as the wretched Effingstone's. He strives to endure them with the fortitude and patience of a martyr; or rather, is struggling to exhibit a spirit of sullen, stoical submission to his fate, such as is inculcated in Arrian's Discourses of Epictetus, which he reads almost all day.* His anguish is so excru-

* Though it may be thought far-fetched and improbable, to represent my patient engaged in the perusal of such works as are mentioned in the text, I can assure the reader, that I

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ciating and uninterrupted, that I am astonished how he retains the use of his reason. All power of locomotion has disappeared long ago. The only parts of his body he can move now, are his fingers, toes, and head—which latter he sometimes shakes about, in a sudden ecstasy of pain, with such frightful violence as would, one would think, almost suffice to sever it from his shoulders! The flesh of the lower extremities—the flesh —— * * Horrible! All sensation has ceased in them for a fortnight! He describes the agonies about his stomach and bowels to be as though wolves were ravenously gnawing and mangling all within.

Oh, my God! if "men about town," in London, or elsewhere, could but see the hideous spectacle Mr Effingstone presents, surely it would palsy them in the pursuit of ruin, and scare them into the paths of virtue!

Mrs ——, his landlady, is so ill with attendance on him—almost poisoned by the foul air in his chamber—that she is gone to the house of a relative for a few weeks, in a distant part of the town, having first engaged one of the poor neighbours to supply her place as Mr Effingstone's nurse. The people opposite, and on each side of the house, are complaining again, loudly, of the strange nocturnal noises heard in Mr Effingstone's room. They are his groanings!

*Tuesday*, 31.—Again I have visited that scene of loathsomeness and horror—Mr Effingstone's chamber. The nurse and George told me he had been raving deliriously all night long. I found him incredibly altered in countenance, so much so, that I should hardly have recognised his features. He was mumbling with his eyes closed, when I entered the room.

"Doctor!" he exclaimed in a tone of doubt and fear, such as I had never known from him before, "you have not heard me abuse the Bible lately, have you?"

"Not *very* lately, Mr Effingstone," I replied, pointedly.

"Good," said he with his usual decision and energy of manner. "There are awful things in that book—aren't there, doctor?"

"Many very awful things there are indeed," I replied, with a sigh.

"I thought so—I thought so. Pray" ——his manner grew suddenly perturbed, and he paused for a moment as if to recollect himself—"Pray—pray" ——again he paused, but could not succeed in disguising his trepidation, "do you happen to recollect whether there are such words in the Bible as —as 'MANY STRIPES?'"

"Yes, there are; and they form part of a very fearful passage," said I, quoting the verse as nearly as I could. He listened silently. His features swelled with suppressed emotion. There was horror in his eye.

"Doctor, what a—a—remark—able —nay, hideous dream I had last night! I thought a fiend came and took me to a gloomy belfry, or some other such place, and muttered 'Many stripes—many stripes,' in my ear: and the huge bell tolled me into madness, for all the damned danced around me to the sound of it; ha! ha!" He added, with a faint laugh, after a pause, "There's something cu—cur—cursedly *odd* in the *coincidence*, isn't there? How it would have frightened *some!*" he continued, a forced smile flitting over his haggard features, as if in mockery. "But it is easily to be accounted for—the intimate connection —sympathy—between mind and matter, reciprocally affecting each other—affecting each——ha, ha, ha! Doctor, it's no use keeping up this damned farce any longer. Human nature won't bear it. D——n! I'm going down to HELL! I am!" said he, almost yelling out the words. I had never before witnessed such a fearful manifestation of his feelings! I almost started from the chair on which I was sitting.

"Why"—he continued, in nearly the same tone and manner, as if he had

have known several men of the world—especially if with any pretension to scholarship—endeavouring to steel themselves against the pain and terrors of the deathbed, by an earnest study of the old stoic philosophy; anything, of course, being better than the mild and glorious consolations of Christianity.

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lost all self-control, "*what* is it that has maddened me all my life, and left me sober only at this ghastly hour—too late?" My agitation would not permit me to do more than whisper a few unconnected words of encouragement, almost inaudible to myself. In about five minutes' time, neither of us having broken the silence of the interval, he said in a calmer tone, "Doctor, be good enough to wipe my forehead—will you?" I did so. "You know better, doctor, of course, than to attach any importance to the nonsensical rantings extorted by deathbed agonies, eh? Don't dying people, at least those who die in great pain, almost always express themselves so? How apt superstition is to rear its dismal flag over the prostrate energies of one's soul, when the body is racked by tortures like mine! Oh!—oh!—oh!—that maddening sensation about the centre of my stomach! Doctor"—he added, after a pause, with a grim air—"go home, and forget all the stuff you have heard me utter to-day—'Richard's himself again!'"

*Thursday, 2d February.*—On arriving this morning at —— Row, I was shown into the back parlour, where sat the nurse, very sick and faint. She begged me to procure a substitute, for that she was nearly killed herself, and nothing should tempt her to continue in her present situation. Poor thing! I did not wonder at it. I told her I would send a nurse from one of the hospitals that evening; and then inquired what sort of a night Mr Effingstone had passed. "Terrible," she said; "groaning, shaking, and roaring all night long—'Many stripes!'—'Many stripes!'—'O God of mercy!' and inquiring perpetually for you." I repaired to the fatal chamber immediately, though latterly my spirits began to fail me whenever I approached the door. I was going to take my usual seat in the arm-chair by the bedside.

"Don't sit there—don't sit there," groaned, or rather gasped Mr Effingstone; "for a hideous being sat in that chair all night long"—every muscle in his face crept and shrunk with horror—"muttering, '*Many stripes!*' Doctor, order that blighted chair to be taken away, broken up, and burnt, every splinter of it! Let no human being ever sit in it again! And give instructions to the people about me never to desert me for a moment—or—or—carry me off!—they will! * * * My frenzied fancy conjures up the ghastliest objects that can scare man into madness." He paused.

"Great God, doctor! suppose, after all, what the Bible says should prove true!"—he literally gnashed his teeth and looked a truer image of Despair than I have ever seen represented in pictures, on the stage, or in real life.

"Why, Mr Effingstone, if it *should*, it need not be to your sorrow, unless you choose to make it so," said I in a soothing tone.

"Needn't it, needn't it?" with an abstracted air—"Needn't it? Oh, good!—hope—there, there IT sat, all night long—there! I've no recollection of any distinct personality, and yet I thought it sometimes looked like—Of course," he added, after a pause, and a sigh of exhaustion—"of course these phantoms, or similar ones, must often have been described to you by dying people—eh?"

*Friday, 3d.*—* * * He was in a strangely altered mood to-day; for though his condition might be aptly described by the words "dead alive," his calm demeanour, his tranquillised features, and the mild expression of his eye, assured me he believed what he said, when he told me that his disorder had "taken a turn,"—that the "crisis was past;" and he should *recover!* Alas! was it ever known that dead *mortified* flesh ever resumed its life and functions! To save himself from the spring of a tiger, he could not have moved a foot or finger, and that for the last week! Poor, poor Mr Effingstone began to thank me for my attentions to him during his illness; said, he "owed his life to my consummate skill;" and he would "trumpet my fame to the Andes, if I succeeded in bringing him through!"

"It has been a very horrible affair, doctor—hasn't it?" said he.

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"Very, very, Mr Effingstone; and it is my duty to tell you, there is yet much horror before you!"

"Ah! well, well! I see you don't want me to be too sanguine—too impatient. It's kindly meant—very! Doctor, when I leave here, I leave it an *altered man!* Come, does that not gratify you, eh?"

I could not help a sigh. He *would* be an *altered man*, and that very shortly! He mistook the feelings which prompted the sigh. "Mind—not that I'm going to commence *saint*—far, oh, *very* far from it; but—but I don't *despair* of being at some time or other a Christian. I don't, upon my honour! The New Testament is a sublime—a—I believe—a revelation of the Almighty. My heart is quite humbled; yet—mark me—I don't mean exactly to say I'm a believer—not by any means; but I can't help thinking that my inquiries might tend to make me so." I hinted that all these were indications of bettered feelings. I could say no more.

"I'm bent on leading a different life to what I have led before, at all events! Let me see—I'll tell you what I have been chalking out during the night. I shall go to Lord ——'s villa in ——, whither I have often been invited, and shall read Lardner and Paley, and get them up thoroughly—I will, by ——!"

"Mr Effingstone, pardon me"——

"Ah! I understand—'twas a mere slip of the tongue; what's bred in the bone, you know"——

"I was not alluding to the oath, Mr Effingstone; but—but it is my duty to warn you"——

"Ah! that I'm not going the right way to work—eh? Well, at all events, I'll consult a clergyman. The Bishop of —— is a distant connection of our family, you know—I'll ask his advice! * * Oh, doctor, look at that rich—that blessed light of the sun! Oh, draw aside the window curtain—let me feel it on me! What an image of the beneficence of the Deity!—a smile flung from his face over the universe!"*

I drew aside the curtain. It was a cold, clear, frosty day, and the sun shone into the room with cheerful lustre. Oh! how awfully distinct were the ravages which his wasted features had sustained! His soul seemed to expand beneath the genial influence of the sunbeams; and he again expressed his confident expectations of recovery.

"Mr Effingstone, do not persist in cherishing false hopes! Once for all," said I, with all the deliberate solemnity I could throw into my manner, "I assure you, in the presence of God, that, unless a miracle takes place, it is utterly impossible for you to recover, or even to last a week longer!" I thought it had killed him. His features whitened visibly as I concluded; his eye seemed to sink, and the eyelids fell. His lips presently moved, but uttered no sound. I thought he had received his death-stroke, and was immeasurably shocked at its having been from my hands, even though in the strict performance of my duty. Half an hour's time, however, saw him restored to nearly the same state in which he had been previously. I begged him to allow me to send a clergyman to him, as the best means of soothing and quieting his mind: but he shook his head despondingly. I pressed my point, and he said deliberately, "*No.*" He muttered some such words as, "The Deity has determined on my destruction, and is permitting his devils to mock me with hopes of this sort—let me go then to my own place!" In this awful state of mind I was compelled to leave him. I sent a clergyman to him in my chaise—the same whom I had called to visit Mr —— (alluding to the "Scholar's Death-bed"); but he refused to see him, saying, that if he presumed to force himself into the room, he would spit in his face, though he could not rise to kick him out! The temper of his

* A provincial critic gravely says of this—"A fine, a noble conceit, it must be owned; but only an expansion of one of Moore's in *Lalla Rookh*—'Twas a bright smile the *Angel* threw from Heaven's gate.'" Whatever may be the merit of the expression in the text, it cannot truly be charged with plagiarism. I never read *Lalla Rookh* in my life, nor ever saw or heard of the above-cited passage, till it was pointed out by the Bristol critic.

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mind had changed into something perfectly diabolical since my interview with him.

*Saturday, 4th.*—Really my own health is suffering—my spirits are sinking through the daily horrors I have to encounter at Mr Effingstone's apartment. This morning I sat by his bedside full half an hour, listening to him uttering nothing but groans that shook my very soul within me. He did not know me when I spoke to him, and took no notice of me whatever. At length his groans were mingled with such expressions as these, indicating that his disturbed fancy had wandered to former scenes:—

"Oh! oh!—Pitch it into him, Bob! Ten to two on Crib! Horrible!—These dice are loaded, Wilmington; by ——, I know they are! *Seven's the main!* Ha!—*done*, by ——! * * Hector, yes—[he was alluding to a favourite race-horse]—won't 'bate a pound of his price! Your Grace shall have him for six hundred—Forelegs, only look at them!—There, there, go it! away, away! neck and neck—In, in, by ——! * * Hannah! what the ——'s become of her?—drowned? No, no, no! What a fiend incarnate that Bet ——— is! * * Oh! horror, horror, horror! Rottenness! Oh, that some one would knock me on the head and end me! * * Fire, fire! Stripes, many stripes—Stuff! You didn't fire fair. By ——, you fired before your time—[alluding, I suppose, to a duel in which he had been concerned]—Curse your cowardice!"

Such was the substance of what he uttered; it was in vain that I tried to arrest the torrent of vile recollections.

"Doctor, doctor, I shall die of fright!" he exclaimed an hour afterwards—"What do you think happened to me last night? I was lying here, with the fire burnt very low, and the candles gone out. George was asleep, poor fellow, and the woman gone out to get an hour's rest also. I was looking about, and suddenly saw the dim outline of a table, set, as it were, in the middle of the room. There were four chairs faintly visible, and three ghostly figures came through that door and sat in them, one by one, leaving one vacant. They began a sort of horrid whispering, more like gasping; they were DEVILS, and talked about—*my* damnation! The fourth chair was for me, they said, and all three turned and looked me in the face. Oh! hideous—shapeless—damned!" He uttered a shuddering groan. * * *

[Here follows an account of his interview with his two brothers—the only members of the family (whom he had at last permitted to be informed of his frightful condition) that would come and see him.] * * * He did little else than rave and howl, in a blasphemous manner, all the while they were present. He seemed hardly to be aware of their being his brothers, and to forget the place where he was. He cursed me, then Sir ——, and his man George, and charged us with compassing his death, concealing his case from his family, and execrating us for not allowing him to be removed to the west end of the town. In vain we assured him that his removal was utterly impossible—the time was past—I had offered it once. He gnashed his teeth, and spit at us all!—"What! die—die—DIE in this damned hole?—I won't die here—I will go to —— Street. Take me off!—*Devils*, then do YOU come and carry me there!—Come—out, out, out upon you!—* * *—You have killed me, all of you!—You're throttling me!—You've put a hill of iron on me—I'm dead—all my body is dead!—* * *—George, you monster! why are you ladling fire upon me?—Where do you get it?—Out, out—out!—I'm flooded with fire!—Scorched—Scorched!—* * Now—now for a dance of devils—Ha—I see! I see!—There's ——, and ——, and ——, among them!—What! all three of you dead—and damned before me?—W——! Where are your loaded dice?—Filled with fire, eh?—* *—So, YOU were the three devils I saw sitting at the table, eh?—Well, I shall be last—but, by ——, I'll be the chief of you!—I'll be king in hell!—* *—What—what's that fiery owl sitting at the bottom of the bed for, eh?—Kick it off—strike it!—Away—out on

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thee, thou imp of hell!—I shall make thee sing presently!—Let in the snakes—let the large serpents in—I love them! I hear them writhing up-stairs——they shall twine about my bed!" He began to shake his head violently from side to side, his eyes glaring like coals of fire, and his teeth gnashing. I never could have imagined anything half so frightful. What with the highly excited state of my feelings, and the horrible scents of death which were diffused about the room, and to which not the strongest salts of ammonia, used incessantly, could render me insensible, I was obliged to leave abruptly. I knew the last act of the black tragedy was closing that night! I left word with the nurse, that so soon as Mr Effingstone should be released from his misery, she should get into a hackney-coach, and come to my house.

* * * *

I lay tossing in bed all night long—my mind suffused with the horrors of the scene of which I have endeavoured to give some faint idea above. Were I to record half what I recollect of his hideous ravings, it would scare myself to read it!—I will not! Let them and their memory perish! Let them never meet the eye or ear of man!—I fancied myself lying side by side with the loathsome thing bearing the name of Effingstone; that I could not move away from him; that his head, shaking from side to side, as I have mentioned above, was battering my cheeks and forehead; in short, I was almost beside myself! I was in the act of uttering a fervent prayer to the Deity, that even in the eleventh hour—the *eleventh* hour—when a violent ringing of the night-bell made me spring out of bed. It was as I suspected. The nurse had come; and, already, all was over. My heart seemed to grow suddenly cold and motionless. I dressed myself, and went down into the drawing-room. On the sofa lay the woman: she had fainted. On recovering her senses, I asked her if all was over; she nodded with an affrighted expression! A little wine and water restored her self-possession. "When did it occur?" I asked. "Exactly as the clock struck three," she replied. "George, and I, and Mr ——, the apothecary, whom we had sent for out of the next street, were standing round the bed. Mr Hardy lay tossing his head about for nearly an hour, saying all manner of horrible things. A few minutes before three he gave a loud howl, and shouted, 'Here, you wretches—why do you put the candles out—here—here—I'm dying!'

"'God's peace be with you, sir!—the Lord have mercy on you!' we groaned, like people distracted.

"'Ha, ha, ha!—D—n you!—D—n you all!—Dying—D—n me! I won't die!—I won't die!—No—No!—D—n me—I won't—won't—WON'T'——he gasped, and made a noise as if he was choked. We looked. Yes, he was gone!"

He was interred in an obscure dissenting burying-ground in the immediate neighbourhood, under the name of Hardy, for his family refused to recognise him.

So lived—so died, "A Man about Town;" and so, alas! will yet live and die many another MAN ABOUT TOWN!

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Notwithstanding the scrupulous and anxious care with which the foregoing fearful narrative was prepared for the public eye, so that a lively picture of the horrors of vice might be drawn, at the same time that a veil was thrown over the more ghastly and revolting features, in the particular instance—the Editor regrets to state, that loud, and, in some instances, *angry* complaints have been made against it, in one or two influential and respectable quarters; and in others, such atrocious misrepresentations of the author's design, accompanied by insulting, nay, beastly insinuations, as have, he fears, succeeded in exciting suspicion and disgust in the minds of those who did not read the paper till *after* they read the cruel and lying character fixed upon it. All those with whom the Editor has conversed, have, without exception, declared they read the paper with feelings of simple unmiti-

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gated grief and agony—in the spirit aimed at by the writer. The Editor further states, that the sketch had in its favour the suffrages of most of the leading prints in town and country, some of whom were pleased to express themselves in terms of such flattering eulogy, as even the writer of the Diary might consider extravagant. Three other such attacks were made upon it by London Journals, as sink their perpetrators beneath the desert of notice. Woe be to those polluted minds and degraded hearts, that could attach *such* meanings as would fain have been fastened on certain portions of "The Man about Town!"

*Sincerum* est nisi vas, quodcunque infundis ACESCIT.

A word to those who may think its statements *exaggerated:* Would to Heaven that he who suspects as much, but once had been beside the frightful deathbed of Effingstone! Talk of exaggeration!—that "the experience of mankind does not, nor ever did, furnish such scenes!" * Why, the Editor knows of such a tale as, if told, might make a devil to leap with horror in the fires!—one that a man might listen to with quaking heart and creeping flesh, and prayers to God that it might be forgotten!

In conclusion, the Editor knows well, that, despite the small cavillers above spoken of, this narrative has wrought the most satisfactory effects upon minds and hearts by themselves thought irreclaimably lost: good evidence of which lies now in his escritoire, and may possibly be appended to some future edition of this work.† And he knows further, that "The Man about Town" will *continue* long to be a beacon, warning off from guilt and ruin the "simple-hearted, the unwary, the beguiled." If there were nothing else in these volumes, the thought of writing "The Man about Town" would bring consolation to the deathbed of its writer, as having endeavoured to render lasting service to society.

* American Paper.

† I am not at liberty to do so, yet.—ED. (4th Edition.)

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# CHAPTER XIII.

## DEATH AT THE TOILET.

"'Tis no use talking to me, mother, I *will* go to Mrs P——'s party to-night, if I die for it—that's flat! You know as well as I do, that Lieutenant N—— is to be there, and he's going to leave town to-morrow—so up I go to dress."

"Charlotte, why will you be so obstinate? You know how poorly you have been all the week; and Dr —— says, late hours are the worst things in the world for you."

"Pshaw, mother! nonsense, nonsense."

"Be persuaded for once, now, I beg! Oh, dear, dear, what a night it is too—it pours with rain, and blows a perfect hurricane! You'll be wet, and catch cold, rely on it. Come now, won't you stop and keep *me* company to night? That's a good girl!"

"Some other night will do as well for that, you know; for now I'll go to Mrs P——'s if it rains cats and dogs. So up—up—up I go!" singing jauntily.

Oh! she shall dance all dress'd in white,
So ladylike.

Such were, very nearly, the words, and such the manner, in which Miss

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J—— expressed her determination to act in defiance of her mother's wishes and entreaties. She was the only child of her widowed mother, and had, but a few weeks before, completed her twenty-sixth year, with yet no other prospect before her than bleak single-blessedness. A weaker, more frivolous, and conceited creature never breathed—the torment of her amiable parent, the nuisance of her acquaintance. Though her mother's circumstances were very straitened, sufficing barely to enable them to maintain a footing in what is called the middling genteel class of society, this young woman contrived, by some means or other, to gratify her penchant for dress, and gadded about here, there, and everywhere, the most showily-dressed person in the neighbourhood. Though far from being even pretty-faced, or having any pretensions to a good figure—for she both stooped and was skinny—she yet believed herself handsome; and by a vulgar, flippant forwardness of demeanour, especially when in mixed company, extorted such attentions as persuaded her that others thought so.

For one or two years she had been an occasional patient of mine. The settled pallor—the sallowness of her complexion, conjointly with other symptoms, evidenced the existence of a liver complaint; and the last visits I had paid her, were in consequence of frequent sensations of oppression and pain in the chest, which clearly indicated some organic disease of her heart. I saw enough to warrant me in warning her mother of the possibility of her daughter's sudden death from this cause, and the imminent peril to which she exposed herself by dancing, late hours, &c.; but Mrs J——'s remonstrances, gentle and affectionate as they always were, were thrown away upon her headstrong daughter.

It was striking eight by the church clock when Miss J——, humming the words of the song above mentioned, lit her chamber-candle by her mother's, and withdrew to her room to dress, soundly rating the servant-girl by the way, for not having starched some article or other which she intended to have worn that evening. As her toilet was usually a long and laborious business, it did not occasion much surprise to her mother, who was sitting by the fire in their little parlour, reading some book of devotion, that the church chimes announced the first quarter past nine o'clock, without her daughter's making her appearance. The noise she had made overhead in walking to and fro to her drawers, dressing-table, &c., had ceased about half an hour ago, and her mother supposed she was then engaged at her glass, adjusting her hair, and preparing her complexion.

"Well, I wonder what can make Charlotte so very careful about her dress to-night!" exclaimed Mrs J——, removing her eyes from the book, and gazing thoughtfully at the fire; "Oh! it must be because young Lieutenant N—— is to be there. Well, I was young myself once, and it's very excusable in Charlotte—heigho!" She heard the wind howling so dismally without that she drew together the coals of her brisk fire, and was laying down the poker, when the clock of —— church struck the second quarter after nine.

"Why, what in the world can Charlotte be doing all this while?" she again inquired. She listened—"I have not heard her moving for the last three quarters of an hour! I'll call the maid and ask." She rang the bell, and the servant appeared.

"Betty, Miss J—— is not gone yet, is she?"

"La, no, ma'am," replied the girl; "I took up the curling-irons only about a quarter of an hour ago, as she had put one of her curls out; and she said she should soon be ready. She's burst her new muslin dress behind, and that has put her into a way, ma'am."

"Go up to her room, then, Betty, and see if she wants anything; and tell her it's half-past nine o'clock," said Mrs J——. The servant accordingly went up-stairs, and knocked at the bedroom door, once, twice, thrice, but received no answer. There was a dead

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silence, except when the wind shook the window. Could Miss J—— have fallen asleep? Oh, impossible! She knocked again, but unsuccessfully, as before. She became a little flustered; and, after a moment's pause, opened the door, and entered. There was Miss J—— sitting at the glass. "Why, la, ma'am!" commenced Betty in a petulant tone, walking up to her, "here have I been knocking for these five minutes, and"——Betty staggered, horror-struck, to the bed, and, uttering a loud shriek, alarmed Mrs J——, who instantly tottered up-stairs, almost palsied with fright.—Miss J——was dead!

I was there within a few minutes, for my house was not more than two streets distant. It was a stormy night in March; and the desolate aspect of things without—deserted streets—the dreary howling of the wind, and the incessant pattering of the rain, contributed to cast a gloom over my mind, when connected with the intelligence of the awful event that had summoned me out, which was deepened into horror by the spectacle I was doomed to witness. On reaching the house, I found Mrs J—— in violent hysterics, surrounded by several of her neighbours, who had been called in to her assistance. I repaired instantly to the scene of death, and beheld what I shall never forget. The room was occupied by a white-curtained bed. There was but one window, and before it was a table, on which stood a looking-glass, hung with a little white drapery; and various articles of the toilet lay scattered about—pins, brooches, curling-papers, ribbons, gloves, &c. An arm-chair was drawn to this table, and in it sat Miss J——, stone dead. Her head rested upon her right hand, her elbow supported by the table; while her left hung down by her side, grasping a pair of curling-irons. Each of her wrists was encircled by a showy gilt bracelet. She was dressed in a white muslin frock, with a little bordering of blonde. Her face was turned towards the glass, which, by the light of the expiring candle, reflected with frightful fidelity the clammy fixed features, daubed over with rouge and carmine—the fallen lower jaw—and the eyes directed full into the glass, with a cold dull stare, that was appalling. On examining the countenance more narrowly, I thought I detected the traces of a smirk of conceit and self-complacency, which not even the palsying touch of death could wholly obliterate. The hair of the corpse, all smooth and glossy, was curled with elaborate precision; and the skinny sallow neck was encircled with a string of glistening pearls. The ghastly visage of death, thus leering through the tinselry of fashion—the "vain show" of artificial joy—was a horrible mockery of the fooleries of life!

Indeed, it was a most humiliating and shocking spectacle! Poor creature! struck dead in the very act of sacrificing at the shrine of female vanity!—She must have been dead for some time, perhaps for twenty minutes or half an hour, when I arrived, for nearly all the animal heat had deserted the body, which was rapidly stiffening. I attempted, but in vain, to draw a little blood from the arm. Two or three women present proceeded to remove the corpse to the bed, for the purpose of laying it out. What strange passiveness! No resistance offered to them while straightening the bent right arm, and binding the jaws together with a faded white riband, which Miss J—— had destined for her waist that evening!

On examination of the body, we found that death had been occasioned by disease of the heart. Her life might have been protracted, possibly, for years, had she but taken my advice, and that of her mother. I have seen many hundreds of corpses, as well in the calm composure of natural death, as mangled and distorted by violence; but never have I seen so startling a satire upon human vanity, so repulsive, unsightly, and loathsome a spectacle, as a *corpse dressed for a ball!*

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# CHAPTER XIV.

## THE TURNED HEAD.

HYPOCHONDRIASIS,* Janus-like, has two faces — a melancholy and a laughable one. The former, though oftener seen in actual life, does not present itself so frequently to the notice of the medical practitioner as the latter; though, in point of fact, the one as imperatively calls for his interference as the other. It may be safely asserted, that a permanently morbid mood of mind invariably indicates a disordered state of some part or other of the physical system; and which of the two forms of hypochondria will manifest itself in a particular case, depends altogether upon the mental idiosyncrasy of the patient. Those of a dull, phlegmatic temperament, unstirred by intermixture and collision with the bustling activities of life, addicted to sombrous trains of reflection, and, by a kind of sympathy, always looking on the gloomy side of things, generally sink, at some period or other of their lives, into the "Slough of Despond"—as old Bunyan significantly terms it—from whence they are seldom altogether extricated. Religious enthusiasts constitute by far the largest portion of those afflicted with this species of hypochondria—instance the wretched Cowper; and such I have never known entirely disabused of their dreadful fantasies. Those, again, of a gay and lively fancy, ardent temperament, and droll, grotesque appetencies, exhibit the laughable aspect of hypochondriasis. In such, you may expect conceits of the most astounding absurdity that could possibly take possession of the topsy-turvied intellects of a confirmed lunatic; and persisted in with a pertinacity—a dogged defiance of evidence to the contrary—which is itself as exquisitely ludicrous, as distressing and provoking. There is generally preserved an amazing *consistency* in the delusion, in spite of the incessant rebuttals of sensation. In short, when once a crotchet, of such a sort as that hereafter mentioned, is fairly entertained in the fancy, the patient *will* not let it go! It is cases of this kind which baffle the adroitest medical tactician. For my own part, I have had to deal with several during the course of my practice, which, if described coolly and faithfully on paper, would appear preposterously incredible to a non-professional reader. Such may possibly be the fate of the following. I have given it with a minuteness of detail, in several parts, which I think is warranted by the interesting nature of the case, by the rarity of such narratives, and, above all, by the peculiar character and talents of the well-known individual who is the patient; and I am convinced that no one would laugh more heartily over it than himself—had he not long lain quiet in his grave!

You could scarcely look on N—— without laughing. There was a sorry sort of humorous expression in his odd and ugly features, which suggested to you the idea that he was always struggling to repel some joyous emotion or other, with painful effort. There was a rich light of intellect in his eye, which was dark and full: you *felt* when its glance was settled upon you — and there it remained concentrated, at the expense of all the other features; for the clumsy ridge of eye-bone impend-

* Arising, as its name imports, from disease in the *hypochondres* (ὑποχόνδρεις)—*i. e.*, the viscera lying under the cartilage of the breast-bone and false ribs, the *liver, spleen*, &c.

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ing sullenly over his eyes—the Pitt-like nose, looking like a finger-and-thumb-ful of dough drawn out from the pliant mass, with two ill-formed holes inserted in the bulbous extremity—and his large, liquorish, shapeless lips—looked, altogether, anything but refined or intellectual. He was a man of fortune—an obstinate bachelor—and educated at Cambridge, where he attained considerable distinction; and, at the period of his introduction to the reader, was in his thirty-eighth or fortieth year. If I were to mention his name, it would recall to the literary reader many excellent, and some admirable portions of literature, for the perusal of which he has to thank N——.

The prevailing complexion of his mind was sombrous; but played on, occasionally, by an arch, humorous fancy, flinging its rays of fun and drollery over the dark surface, like moonbeams on midnight waters. I do believe he considered it sinful to smile! There was a puckering up of the corner of the mouth, and a forced corrugation of the eyebrows, the expression of which was set at nought by the comicality—the solemn drollery—of the eyes. You saw Momus leering out of every glance of them! He said many very witty things in conversation, and had a knack of uttering the quaintest conceits with something like a whine of compunction in his tone, which insured him roars of laughter. As for his own laugh—when he *did* laugh—there is no describing it—short, sudden, unexpected was it, like a flash of powder in the dark. Not a trace of real merriment lingered on his features an instant after the noise had ceased. You began to doubt whether he had laughed at all, and to look about to see where the explosion came from. Except on such rare occasions of forgetfulness on his part, his demeanour was very calm and quiet. He loved to get a man who would come and sit with him all the evening, smoking and sipping wine in cloudy silence. He could not endure bustle or obstreperousness; and when he did unfortunately fall foul of a son of noise, as soon as he had had "a sample of his quality," he would abruptly rise and take his leave, saying, in a querulous tone, like that of a sick child, "I'll go!" (probably these two words will at once recall him to the memory of more than one of my readers)—and he was as good as his word; for all his acquaintance—and I among the number—knew his eccentricities, and excused them.

Such was the man—at least as to the more prominent points of his character—whose chattering black servant presented himself hastily to my notice one morning, as I was standing on my door-steps, pondering the probabilities of wet or fine for the day. He spoke in such a spluttering tone of trepidation, that it was some time before I could conjecture what was the matter. At length, I distinguished something like the words, "Oh, Docta, docta, com-a, and see-a a Massa! Com-a! Him so gashly—him so ill—ver dam bad—him say so—Oh, lorra-lorra-lorra! Come see-a a Massa—him ver orrid!"

"Why, what on earth is the matter with you, you sable, eh? Why can't you speak slower, and tell me plainly what's the matter?" said I impatiently, for he seemed inclined to gabble on in that strain for some minutes longer. "*What's* the matter with your master, sirrah, eh?" I inquired, jerking his striped morning jacket.

"Oh, docta! docta! com-a—Massa ver bad! Him say so!—Him head turned! Him head turned!"

"Him *what*, sirrah?" said I, in amazement.

"Him *head turned*, docta—him head turned," replied the man, slapping his fingers against his forehead.

"Oh, I see how it is, I see; ah, yes," I replied, pointing to my forehead in turn, wishing him to see that I understood him to say his master had been seized with a fit of insanity.

"Iss, iss, docta—him massa *head turned*—him head turned! Dam bad!"

"Where is Mr N——, Nambo, eh?"

"Him lying all 'long in him bed, Massa—him dam bad. But him 'tickler quiet—him head turned."

"Why, Nambo, what makes *you* say

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your master's head's turned, eh? What d'ye mean, sir?"

"Him, massa, self say so—him did—him head turned. D—m!" I felt as much at a loss as ever; it was so odd for a gentleman to acknowledge to his negro servant that his *head was turned*.

"Ah! he's gone *mad*, you mean, eh?—is that it? Hem! *Mad*—is it so?" said I, pointing, with a wink, to my forehead.

"No, no, docta—him head turned!—him *head*," replied Nambo; and, raising both his hands to his head, he seemed trying to twist it round! I could make nothing of his gesticulations, so I dismissed him, telling him to take word that I should make his master's my first call. I may as well say, that I was on terms of friendly familiarity with Mr N——, and puzzled myself all the way I went with attempting to conjecture what *new* crotchet he had taken into his odd, and latterly, I began to suspect, half-addled head. He had never disclosed symptoms of what is generally understood by the word hypochondriasis; but I often thought there was not a likelier subject in the world for it. At length I found myself knocking at my friend's door, fully prepared for some specimen of amusing eccentricity—for the thought never crossed my mind that he might be really ill. Nambo instantly answered my summons, and, in a twinkling, conducted me to his master's bedroom. It was partially darkened, but there was light enough for me to discern that there was nothing unusual in his appearance. The bed was much tossed, to be sure, as if with the restlessness of the recumbent, who lay on his back, with his head turned on one side, buried deep on the pillow, and his arms folded together outside the counterpane. His features certainly wore an air of exhaustion and dejection, and his eye settled on me with an alarmed expression from the moment that he perceived my entrance.

"Oh, dear doctor!—Isn't this frightful?—Isn't it a dreadful piece of business?"

"Frightful!—dreadful business!" I repeated with much surprise. "*What* is frightful? Are you ill—have you had an accident, eh?"

"Ah, ah!—you may well ask that!" he replied; adding, after a pause, "it took place this morning—about two hours ago!"

"You speak in parables, Mr N——! Why, what in the world is the matter with you?"

"About two hours ago—yes," he muttered, as if he had not heard me. "Doctor, do tell me truly now, for the curiosity of the thing—what did you think of me on first entering the room, eh?—Feel inclined to laugh, or be shocked—which?"

"Mr N——, I really have no time for trifling, as I am particularly busy to-day. Do, I beg, be a little more explicit! Why have you sent for me? *What* is the matter with you?"

"Why, God bless me, doctor!" he replied, with an air of angry surprise in his manner, which I never saw before, "I think, indeed, it's *you* who are trifling! Have you lost your eyesight this morning? Do you pretend to say that you do not see I have undergone one of the most extraordinary alterations in appearance that the body of man is capable of—such as never was heard or read of before?"

"Once more, Mr N——," I repeated, in a tone of calm astonishment, "be so good as to be explicit. What are you raving about?"

"Raving!—Egad, I think it's *you* who are raving, doctor!" he answered; "or you must wish to insult me! Do you pretend to tell me you do not see that *my head is turned?*" and he looked me in the face steadily and sternly.

"Ha, ha, ha! Upon my honour, N——, I've been suspecting as much for this last five or ten minutes! I don't think a patient ever described his disease more accurately before!"

"Don't mock me, Doctor ——," replied N—— sternly. "'Pon my soul, I can't bear it! It's enough for me to endure the horrid sensations I do!"

"Mr N——, what *do* you"——

"Why, confound it, Doctor ——! you'll drive me mad! Can't you see

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that the back of my head is in front, and my face looking backwards? Horrible!" I burst into loud laughter.

"Doctor ——, it's time for you and me to part—high time," said he, turning his face away from me. "I'll let you know that I'll stand your nonsense no longer! I called you in to give me your advice, not to sit grinning like a baboon by my bedside! Once more—finally, Doctor ——, are you disposed to be serious and rational? If you are not, my man shall show you to the door the moment you please." He said this in such a sober, earnest tone of indignation, that I saw he was fully prepared to carry his threat into execution. I determined, therefore, to humour him a little, shrewdly suspecting some temporary suspension of his sanity—not exactly *madness*—but at least some extraordinary hallucination. To adopt an expression which I have several times heard him use—"I saw what o'clock it was, and set my watch to the time."

"Oh—well!—I see now how matters stand!—The fact is, I *did* observe the extraordinary posture of affairs you complain of immediately I entered the room, but supposed you were joking with me, and twisting your head round in that odd way for the purpose of hoaxing me; so I resolved to wait and see which of us could play our parts in the farce longest! Why, good God! how's all this, Mr N——! Is it then *really* the case?—Are you—in—in earnest—in having your head turned?"

"*In earnest*, doctor!" replied Mr N—— in amazement. "Why, do you suppose this happened by my own will and agency?—Absurd!"

"Oh! no, no—most assuredly not—it is a phenomenon—hem! hem!—a phenomenon—not unfrequently attending on the *nightmare*," I answered, with as good a grace as possible.

"Poh, poh, doctor!—Nonsense!—You must really think me a child, to try to mislead me with such stuff as that! I tell you again, I am in as sober possession of my senses as ever I was in my life; and, once more, I assure you, that, in truth and reality, my head is turned—literally so."

"Well, well!—So I see!—It is, indeed, a very extraordinary case—a very unusual one; but I don't, by any means, despair of bringing all things round again! Pray, tell me how this singular and afflicting accident happened to you?"

"Certainly," said he, despondingly. "Last night, or rather this morning, I dreamed that I had got to the West Indies—to Barbadoes—an island where I have, as you know, a little estate, left me by my uncle C——; and that, a few moments after I had entered the plantation, for the purpose of seeing the slaves at work, there came a sudden hurricane, a more tremendous one than ever was known in those parts—trees—canes—huts—all were swept before it! Even the very ground on which we stood seemed whirled away beneath us! I turned my head a moment to look at the direction in which things were going, when, in the very act of turning, the blast suddenly caught my head, and—oh, my God!—blew it completely round on my shoulders, till my face looked quite—directly behind me—over my back! In vain did I almost wrench my head off my shoulders, in attempting to twist it round again; and what with horror, and—and—altogether—in short, I awoke—and found the frightful reality of my situation! Oh, gracious Heaven!" continued Mr N——, clasping his hands, and looking upwards, "what have I done to deserve such a horrible visitation as this!"

Humph! it is quite clear what is the matter *here*, thought I; so, assuming an air of becoming professional gravity, I felt his pulse, begged him to let me see his tongue, made many inquiries about his general health, and then proceeded to subject all parts of his neck to a most rigorous examination; before, behind, on each side, over every natural elevation and depression (if such the usual varieties of surface may be termed) did my fingers pass; he all the while sighing, and cursing his evil stars, and wondering how it was that he had not been killed by the "dislocation!" This little farce over, I continued silent for some moments, scarcely able, the while, to control my

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inclination to burst into fits of laughter, as if pondering the possibility of being able to devise some means of cure.

"Ah, thank God!"—said I abruptly—"I have it, I have it."——

"What!—what—eh?—what is it?" he inquired with anxiety.

"I've thought of a remedy, which, if—if—if anything in the world can bring it about, will set matters right again—will bring back your head to its former position."

"Oh, God be praised!—dear—dear doctor!—if you do but succeed, I shall consider a thousand pounds but the earnest of what I *will* do to evince my gratitude!" he exclaimed, squeezing my hand fervently.

"But I am not absolutely certain that we shall succeed," said I cautiously. "We will, however, give the medicine a twenty-four hours' trial; during all which time you must be in perfect repose, and consent to lie in utter darkness. Will you abide by my directions?"

"Oh, yes—yes—yes!—dear doctor!—What *is* the inestimable remedy? Tell me—tell me the name of my ransomer. I'll never divulge it—never!"

"That is not consistent with my plans at present, Mr N——," I replied seriously; "but, if successful—of which I own I have *very* sanguine expectations—I pledge my honour to reveal the secret to you."

"Well—but—at least you'll explain the nature of its operation—eh? is it internal—external—what?" The remedy, I told him, would be of both forms; the latter, however, the more immediate agent of his recovery; the former, preparatory—predisposing. I may tell the reader simply what my physic was to be: three *bread-pills* (the ordinary *placebo* in such cases) every hour; a strong laudanum draught in the evening, and a huge bread-and-water poultice for his neck, with which it was to be environed till the parts were sufficiently *mollified* to admit of the neck's being twisted back again into its former position!—and, when that was the case—why—to insure its permanency, he was to wear a broad band of strengthening plaster for a week!! This was the bright device, struck out by me—all at a heat; and which, explained to the poor victim, with the utmost solemnity and deliberation of manner—all the wise winks and knowing nods, and hesitating "hems" and "ha's" of professional usage—sufficed to inspire him with some confidence as to the result. I confess I shared the most confident expectations of success. A sound night's rest—hourly pill-taking—and the clammy saturating sensation about his neck, I fully believed would bring him, or rather his head round; and, in the full anticipation of seeing him disabused of the ridiculous notion he had taken into his head, I promised to see him the first thing in the morning, and took my departure. After quitting the house, I could not help laughing immoderately at the recollection of the scene I had just witnessed; and a Mrs M——, by the way—who happened to be passing on the other side of the street, and observed my involuntary risibility—took occasion to spread an ill-natured rumour, that I was in the habit of "making myself merry at the expense of my patients!"

I foresaw, that should this "crick in the neck" prove permanent, I stood a chance of listening to innumerable conceits of the most whimsical and paradoxical kind imaginable—for I knew N——'s natural turn to humour. It was inconceivable to me how such an extraordinary delusion could bear the blush of daylight, resist the evidence of his senses, and the unanimous simultaneous assurances of all who beheld him. Though it is little credit to me, and tells but small things for my self-control—I cannot help acknowledging, that at the bedside of my next patient, who was within two or three hours of her end, the surpassing absurdity of the "turned head" notion glared in such ludicrous extremes before me, that I was near bursting a blood-vessel with endeavours to suppress a perfect peal of laughter!

About eleven o'clock the next morn-

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ing, I paid N—— a second visit. The door was opened, as usual, by his black servant, Nambo; by whose demeanour I saw that something or other extraordinary awaited me. His sable swollen features, and dancing white eyeballs, showed that he was nearly bursting with laughter. "He—he—he!" he chuckled, in a sort of *sotto voce*, "him Massa head turned!—Him back in front! Him waddle!—he—he—he!" —and he twitched his clothes—jerking his jacket and pointing to his breeches, in a way that I did not understand. On entering the room, where N——, with one of his favourite silent smoking friends (M——, the late well-known counsel), were sitting at breakfast, I encountered a spectacle which nearly made me expire with laughter. It is almost useless to attempt describing it on paper—yet I will try. Two gentlemen sat opposite each other at the breakfast table, by the fire; the one with his face to me was Mr M——; and N—— sat with his back towards the door by which I entered. A glance at the former sufficed to show me that he was sitting in tortures of suppressed risibility. He was quite red in the face —his features were swollen and puffy —and his eyes fixed strainingly on the fire, as though through fear of encountering the ludicrous figure of his friend. They were averted from the fire, for a moment, to welcome my entrance—and then redirected thither with such a painful effort—such a comical air of compulsory seriousness—as, added to the preposterous fashion after which poor N—— had chosen to dress himself, completely overcame me. The thing was irresistible; and my utterance of that peculiar choking sound, which indicates the most strenuous efforts to suppress one's risible emotions, was the unwitting signal for each of us bursting into a long and loud shout of laughter. It was in vain that I bit my under lip, almost till it brought blood, and that my eyes strained till the sparks flashed from them, in the futile attempt to cease laughing; for full before me sat the exciting cause of it, in the shape of N——, his head supported by the palm of his left hand, with his elbow propped against the side of the arm-chair. The knot of his neckerchief was tied with its customary formal precision—but behind—at the nape of his neck; his coat and waistcoat were buttoned down his back; and his trousers, moreover, to match the novel fashion, buttoned behind, and, of course, the hinder parts of them bulged out ridiculously in front! Only to look at the coat-collar fitting under the chin, like a stiff military stock—the four tail buttons of brass glistening conspicuously before, and the front parts of the coat buttoned carefully over his back —the compulsory handiwork of poor Nambo!

N——, perfectly astounded at our successive shouts of laughter—for we found it impossible to stop—suddenly rose up in his chair, and, almost inarticulate with fury, demanded what we meant by such extraordinary behaviour. This fury, however, was all lost on *me;* I could only point, in an ecstasy of laughter almost bordering on frenzy, to his novel mode of dress, as my apology. He stamped his foot, uttered volleys of imprecations against us; and then, ringing his bell, ordered the servant to show us both to the door. The most violent emotions, however, must, in time, expend their violence, though in the presence of the same exciting cause; and so it was with Mr M—— and myself. On seeing how seriously affronted N—— was, we both sat down, and I entered into examination, my whole frame aching with the prolonged convulsive fits of irrepressible laughter.

It would be in vain to attempt a recital of one of the drollest conversations in which I ever bore part. N——'s temper was thoroughly soured for some time. He declared that my physic was all a humbug, and a piece of quackery; and the "filthy *pudding* round his neck," the absurdest farce he ever heard of: he had a great mind to make Nambo eat it, for the pains he had taken in making it and fastening it on —poor fellow!



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Presently he lapsed into a melancholy reflective mood. He protested that the laws of locomotion were utterly inexplicable to him—a practical paradox; that his volitions as to progressive and retrogressive motion neutralised each other; and the necessary result was the cursed circumgyratory motion—for all the world like that of a hen that had lost one of its wings! That henceforward he should be compelled to crawl, crab-like, through life, all ways at once, and none in particular. He could not conceive, he said, which was the nearest way from one given point to another; in short, that all his sensations and perceptions were disordered and confounded. His situation, he said, was an admirable commentary on the words of St Paul—"But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind." He could not conceive how the arteries and veins of the neck could carry and return the blood, after being so shockingly twisted; or "how the windpipe went on" affording a free course to the air through its distorted passage. In short, he said, he was a walking lie!

Curious to ascertain the *consistency* of this anomalous state of feeling, I endeavoured once more to bring his delusion to the test of simple sensation, by placing one hand on his nose, and the other on his breast, and asking him which was which, and whether both did not lie in the same direction. He wished to know why I persisted in making myself merry at his expense! I repeated the question, still keeping my hands in the same position; but he suddenly pushed them off, and asked me, with indignation, if I was not ashamed to keep his head looking over his shoulder in that way; accompanying the words with a shake of the head, and a sigh of exhaustion, as if it had really been twisted round into the wrong direction. "Ah!" he exclaimed, after a pause, "if this unnatural state of affairs should prove permanent—hem!—I'll put an end to the chapter! He, he, he!—He, he, he!" he continued, bursting suddenly into one of those short abrupt laughs, which I have before attempted to describe. "He, he, he!—how *very* odd!" We both asked him, in surprise, what he meant, for his eyes were fixed on the fire, in apparently a melancholy mood.

"He, he, he!—exquisitely odd!" he continued, without answering us. "He, he, he!" After repeated inquiries, he disclosed the occasion of his unusual cachinnations.

"I've just been thinking," said he, "suppose—he, he, he!—suppose it were to come to pass that I should be *hanged*—he, he, he!—he, he, he!—God forbid, by the way—but, suppose I should, how old Ketch would be puzzled!—My face looking one way, and my tied hands and arms poking another! How the crowd would stare! He, he, he! And suppose," pursuing the train of thought, "I were to be publicly whipped—how I could superintend operations! And again—how the devil am I to ride on horseback, eh? with my face to the tail, or —— to the mane? In short, what is to become of me? I am, in effect, shut out from society! I am something else than a mere turncoat!"

"You have only to *walk circumspectly*," said M——, with an air of solemn waggery—"and as for *back*-biters—hem!"

"That's odd—very—but impertinent," replied the hypochondriac, with a mingled expression of chagrin and humour.

"Come, come, N——, don't look so steadily on the dark side of things," said I.

"The *dark* side of things?" he inquired; "I think it is the *back*-side of things I am compelled to look at!"

"Look forward to better days," said I.

"*Look forward*, again! What nonsense!" he replied, interrupting me; "impossible! How can I *look forward?* My life will henceforth be spent in wretched *retrospections!*" and he could not help smiling at the conceit. Having occasion, during the conversation, to use his pocket-handkerchief, he suddenly reached his hand behind as usual, and was a little confused to find that the unusual position

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of his coat-pocket required that he should take it from before! This I should have conceived enough to put an end to his delusion; but I was mistaken.

"Ah! it will take some time to reconcile me to this new order of things; but practice—practice—makes perfect, you know!" It was amazing to me that his sensations, so contradictory to the absurd crotchet he had taken into his head, did not convince him of his error, especially when so frequently compelled to act in obedience to long-accustomed impulses. As, for instance, on my rising to go, he suddenly started from his chair, shook my hands, and accompanied me to the door, as if nothing had been the matter.

"Well, now! What do you think of that?" said I triumphantly.

"Ah, ah!" said he, after a puzzled pause, "but you little know the effort it cost me!"

* * * *

He did not persevere long in the absurd way of putting on his clothes which I have just described; but even after he had discontinued it, he alleged his opinion to be, that the front of his clothes ought to be with his face! I might relate many similar absurdities springing from this notion of his turned head, but sufficient has been said already to give the reader a clear idea of the general character of such delusions. My subsequent interviews with him, while under this unprecedented hallucination, were similar to the two which I have attempted to describe. The fit lasted near a month. At length, however, I happened luckily to recollect a device successfully resorted to by a sagacious old English physician, in the case of a royal hypochondriac abroad, who fancied that his nose had swelled into greater dimensions than those of his whole body beside; and forthwith resolved to adopt a similar method of cure with N——. *Electricity* was to be the wonder-working talisman! I lectured him out of all opposition, silenced his scruples, and got him to fix an evening for the exorcisation of the evil spirit—as it might well be called—which had taken possession of him.

Let the reader fancy, then, N——'s sitting-room, about seven o'clock in the evening, illuminated with a cheerful fire, and four mould candles; the awful electrifying machine duly disposed for action; Mr S—— of —— Hospital, Dr ——, and myself, all standing round it, adjusting the jars, chains, &c.; and Nambo busily engaged in laying bare his master's neck, N—— all the while eyeing our motions with excessive trepidation. I had infinite difficulty in getting his consent to one preliminary — the bandaging of his eyes. I succeeded, however, at last, in persuading him to undergo the operation blindfolded, by assuring him that it was essential to success; for that, if he was allowed to see the application of the conductor to the precise spot requisite, he might start, and occasion its apposition to a wrong place! The *real* reason will be seen presently; the great manœuvre could not have been practised but on such terms; for how could I give his head a sudden twist round, and S—— give him a smart stroke on the crown of the head at the instant of his receiving the shock, if he saw what we were about? I ought to have mentioned that we also prevailed upon him to sit with his arms pinioned, so that he was completely at our mercy. None of us could refrain from an occasional titter at the absurdity of the solemn farce we were playing—fortunately, however, unheard by N——. At length, Nambo being turned out, and the doors locked—lest, seeing the trick, he might disclose it subsequently to his master —we commenced operations. S—— worked the machine — round, and round, and round, whizzing — sparkling—crackling—till the jar was moderately charged: it was then conveyed to N——'s neck, Dr —— using the conductor. N——, on receiving a tolerably smart shock, started out of his chair, and I had not time to give him the twist I had intended. After a few moments, however, he protested that he felt "something loosened" about his neck, and was easily induced

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to submit to another shock, considerably stronger than the former. The instant the rod was applied to his neck, I gave the head a sudden excruciating wrench towards the left shoulder; S—— striking him, at the same moment, a smart blow on the crown. Poor N——!

"Thank God!" we all exclaimed, as if panting for breath.

"I—i—s it all over?" stammered N—— faintly—quite confounded with the effects of the threefold remedy we had adopted.

"Yes—thank God, we have at last brought your head round again, and your face looks forward now as heretofore!" said I.

"Oh, remove the bandage—remove it! Let my own eyesight behold it!—Bring me a glass!"

"As soon as the proper bandages have been applied to your neck, Mr N——."

"What, eh—a *second* pudding, eh?"

"No, merely a broad band of diachylum plaster, to prevent—hem—the contraction of the skin," said I. As soon as that was done, we removed the handkerchiefs from his eyes and arms.

"Oh, my God, how delightful!" he exclaimed, rising and walking up to the mirror over the mantelpiece.—"Ecstasy! All really right again"——

"My dear N——, do not, I beg, do not work your neck about in that way, or the most serious disarrangement of the—the parts," said I——

"Oh! it's so, is it? Then I'd better get into bed at once, I think, and you'll call in the morning."

I did, and found him in bed. "Well, how does all go on this morning?" I inquired.

"Pretty well—middling," he replied, with some embarrassment of manner. "Do you know, doctor, I've been thinking about it all night long—and I strongly suspect"—(his serious air alarmed me—I began to fear that he had discovered the trick)—"I strongly suspect—hem—hem"—he continued.

"*What?*" I inquired, rather sheepishly.

"Why, that it was my *brains* only that were turned—and that—that—most ridiculous piece of business"——

"Why, to be sure, Mr N——" * * —and he was so ashamed about it that he set off for the country immediately; and, among the glens and mountains of Scotland, endeavoured to forget ever having dreamed that his HEAD WAS TURNED.

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One of the papers roundly asserts, that the foregoing is "pure fiction." I like the modesty and caution of this; the more especially when I *know* it is next to impossible for the assertor to know anything about the matter. But mark his reasoning:—

"The conceit is droll and witty enough," he says, "but, unfortunately, is *too much so* for truth! Who ever heard of such a *consistent* delusion—in such a *humorous* subject?"

I leave this little argumentative chokepear for a child to nibble at: medical men know better. Samuel or Charles Wesley (surviving relatives of the celebrated John Wesley) fancied himself a TEAPOT; and stuck to the notion strongly for some time! I know one whom he told of his "misfortune."

A medical man in Lincolnshire, a few years ago, persuaded himself into the notion that he had been transformed into a GREATCOAT! No one now laughs at the thing more heartily than himself; at the same time protesting that his delusion was complete at the time! I have heard, also, that the late Mr Nollekens fancied he had sunk into a *pair of shoes;* and would ask people, if they "put him on," to keep out of the *wet* as much as possible!

The gentleman with whom I was articled had the care of the workhouse; and I saw there a woman who seriously told me she was *dead*, and had been so for many weeks. She was taking *tea*, when she told me of the strange fact. "Well, I think yours is a pretty comfortable sort of death," said I; but she replied, with a sigh, "It was *Satan* that had entered into her body the moment her own soul had left it, and plagued her with eating, drinking, talking, and living, without any of the pleasure and relish of

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true life!" The woman was a Roman Catholic; and said she was suffering the pains of purgatory for a wicked life.

A metaphysical gentleman — once a member of Parliament—not many years ago imagined himself a SPIRIT—an impalpable, intangible being. He said he had the power of pervading matter, and knew the secret cause of its cohesion, having, in a manner, seen and known it while operating. He said he had a perfect knowledge of the "quomodo," as he called it, of the presence and operation of *gravity*. He was asked for an explanation of the phenomena, and made an answer in a long tissue of metaphysic rigmarole, unintelligible to any one that heard him. He said, that as for himself, he had the power of diffusing himself over the centre of our globe, and interfusing his influence throughout the whole congeries of matter, till the earth swelled to a thousand times its present dimensions—that *all* spirits had the same power!

"Why, mercy on us! Mr ——," said Sir ——, with affected alarm, "we're not *safe*, then! Perhaps the world is *swelling* under us now! What is to become of us?"

"Spirit is *benevolent* and wise; so you are safe!" replied the hypochondriac, with a most singular air, as if he *half* saw the absurdity of his notion, and was half angry with Sir ——. "You *might* cut your son's throat—but you *don't!*" During the same interview, he told his medical man that "the soul of Kant" wandered "through the universe;" and once diffused itself so extensively, as to render its *re-compression* very difficult! "If you only knew *how*, you could compress *me* into a compass infinitely less than that of a needle point," said he solemnly!

If the veracity of this instance should be seriously questioned, it *is* possible that the *ci-devant* hypochondriac himself might step for a moment from his elegant and profound privacy, where thought and imagination dwell "gloriously supreme," and good-humouredly attest the truth of what I am relating. I have given the few amusing instances above, out of a store of many similar ones; and, reader, if you are extra-professional, and still a doubter, ask the most experienced medical friend you have, whether, in the above, you are required to put faith in improbabilities and figments.

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# CHAPTER XV.

## THE WIFE.

*Monday Evening, July* 25, 18—.—Well! the poor martyr has at last been released from her sufferings, and her wasted remains lie hid in the kindly gloom of the grave. Yes, sweet, abused, forgiving Mrs T——! I this morning attended your funeral, and let fall tears of unavailing regret! Shall I tell your sad story all in one word or two? The blow that broke your heart was struck by YOUR HUSBAND!

Heaven grant me calmness in recording your wrongs! Let not the feelings of outraged humanity prompt me to "set down aught in malice." May I be dispassionately enough disposed to say but the *half*, nay, even the hundredth part only, of what I know, and my conscience will stand acquitted! Let not him who shall read these pages anticipate anything of romance, of high-flown rodomontade, in what follows. It is all about a poor, ill-used, heart-broken WIFE; and such an

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object is, alas! too often met with in all classes of society, to attract, in an ordinary case, anything of public notice. The ensuing narrative will not, however, be found an ordinary case. It is fraught with circumstances of such peculiar aggravation, and exhibits such a moving picture of the tenderness and unrepining fortitude of woman, that I am tempted to give it at some length. Its general accuracy may be relied upon, for I succeeded in wringing it from the lips of the poor sufferer herself. I must, however, be allowed to give it in my own way; though at the risk of its being thereby divested of much of that sorrowful simplicity and energy—that touching *naïveté* which characterised its utterance. I shall conclude with extracting some portions of my notes of visits made in a professional capacity.

Miss Jane C—— had as numerous a retinue of suitors as a pretty person, well-known sweetness of disposition, considerable accomplishments, and £10,000 in the funds, could not fail of procuring to their possessor. She was an orphan, and was left absolute mistress of her property on attaining her twenty-first year. All the members of her own family most strenuously backed the pretensions of the curate of the parish—a young man of ascertained respectability of character and family, with a snug stipend, and fair prospects of preferment. His person and manners were agreeable and engaging; and he could not conceal his inclination to fling them both at Miss C——'s feet. All who knew the parties, said it would be an excellent match in all respects, and a happy couple they would make. Miss C—— herself could not look at the curate with indifference—at least, if any inference might be drawn from an occasional flushing of her features at church, whenever the eyes of the clergyman happened to glance at her—which was much oftener than his duty required. In short, the motherly gossips of the place all looked upon it as a settled thing, and had pitched upon an admirable house for the future couple. They owned unanimously that "the girl *might* have gone farther and fared worse," and so forth; which is a great deal for such people to say about such matters.

There happened, however, to be given a great ball, by the lady of the ex-mayor, where Miss C—— was one of the stars of the evening; and at this party there chanced to be a young Londoner, who had just come down on a three-weeks' holiday. He was training for the law in a solicitor's office, and was within six or seven months of the expiration of his articles. He was a personable sort of fellow to look at—a spice of a dandy—and had that kind of air about him which tells *of town*—if not of the blandness, ease, and elegance of the West, still—*of town*—which contrasted favourably with the comparative ungainliness of provincials. He was, in a word, a sort of small star; a triton among the minnows; and whatever he said or did *took* infallibly. Apprised by some judicious relatives of the united charms of Miss C——'s purse and person, he took care to pay her the most conspicuous attentions. Alas! the quiet claims of the curate were soon silenced by his bustling rival. This young spark chattered Miss C—— out of her calm senses. Wherever she went he followed; whatever she said or did, he applauded. He put into requisition all his small acquirements—he sang a little, danced more, and talked an infinity. To be brief, he determined on carrying the fort with a *coup de main;* and he succeeded. The poor curate was forgotten for ever! Before the enterprising young lawyer left ——, he was an accepted suitor of Miss C——'s. The coldness of all her friends and acquaintances signified nothing to her; her lover had, by some means or other, obtained so powerful a hold of her affections, that sneers, reproaches, remonstrances, threats, on the part of all who had previously betrothed her to the curate, "passed by her as the idle wind, which she regarded not." She promised to become his wife as soon as his articles should have expired, and to live in London.

In due time, as matters approached

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a crisis, friends were called in to talk over preliminaries. Mr T—— proved to be comparatively penniless; but what was that? Miss C—— acted with very unusual generosity. She insisted on settling only half her fortune—and left the other half entirely at his disposal. On receiving this intelligence from her own lips, the young man uttered the most frantic expressions of gratitude; promised her eternal love and faithfulness; protested that he idolised her; and—*took her at her word*. It was in vain that cautious relatives stepped in to tender their remonstrances to Miss C—— on the imprudent extent to which she was placing her fortune beyond her own control. Opposition only consolidates and strengthens the resolutions of a woman whose mind is once made up. The generous creature believed implicitly every word that her lover poured into her delighted ear; and was not startled into anything like distrust, even when she found that her young husband had expended, at one fell swoop, nearly £3000 of the £5000 she had so imprudently placed at his disposal—in "establishing themselves in London," as he termed it. He commenced a rate of living which it would have required an income of at least £1000 a-year to support; and when an uncle of his wife's took upon him to represent to Mr T—— his ruinous extravagance—his profligate expenditure of his wife's funds, which all their mutual friends were lamenting and reprobating, he was treated with an insolence which for ever put an end to *his* interference, and effectually prevented that of any other party.

All, however, might yet have gone right, had Mr T—— paid but a moderate attention to his business; for his father had the command of an excellent town connection, which soon put enough into his son's hands to keep two clerks in regular employment.

It was not long before his wife was shocked by hearing her husband make incessant complaints of the drudgery of the office, though he did not devote, on an average, more than two or three hours a-day to it. He was always proposing some new party, some delightful drive, some enchanting excursion, to her; and she dared not refuse, for he had, already, once disclosed symptoms of a most imperious temper whenever his will was interfered with. She began to grow very uneasy, as she saw him drawing cheque after cheque on their banker, without once replacing a single sum! Good God! what was to become of them? He complained of the tardy returns of business; and yet he left it altogether to the management of two hired clerks! He was beginning also to grow irregular in his habits; repeatedly kept her waiting for hours, expecting his return to dinner in vain; filled his table with frequent draughts from the gayest and most dissipated of his professional acquaintance, whose uproar, night after night, alarmed every one in the house, and disturbed even the neighbours. Then he took to billiard-playing, and its invariable concomitants—drinking and late hours; the theatres, frequented alone for the purpose—alas! too notorious to escape even the chaste ears of his unfortunate and insulted wife—of mingling with the low wretches—the harpies—who frequent the slips and saloons; then "drinking bouts" at taverns, and midnight "larks" in company with a set of vulgar, ignorant, young coxcombs, who always left him to settle the reckoning.

He sent one of the clerks to his banker's, one morning, with a cheque for £10; which proved to be the exact amount by which he had "overdrawn" his account — and worse — returned without the usual accommodation afforded. He was a little dismayed at finding such to be the state of things, and went up-stairs to his wife to tell her, with a curse, of "the meanness," the "d—d stinginess," of Messrs ——.

"What! Is it *all* spent, George?" she inquired, in a gentle and faint tone of voice.

"Every rap, by ——, Jane!" was the reply. She turned pale, and trembled, while her husband, putting his hands in his pockets, walked sullenly to and fro about the parlour. With trembling hesitation, Mrs T—— allud-

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ed to the near approach of her confinement, and asked, almost inaudible with agitation, and the fear of offending him, whether he had made *any* provision for the necessary expenses attending it—had laid up *anything*. He replied in the negative, in a very petulant tone. She could not refrain from shedding tears.

"Your crying can't mend matters," said he rudely, walking to the window, and humming the words of some popular air.

"Dear, dear George! have you seen anything in my conduct to displease you?" she inquired, wiping her eyes.

"Why do you ask me that, Mrs T——?" said he, walking slowly towards her, and eyeing her very sternly. She trembled, and had scarcely breath enough to answer, that she had feared such might have been the case, because he had become *rather* cool towards her of late.

"D'ye mean to say, ma'am, that I have used you ill, eh? Because, if you do, it's a d——"

"Oh no, no, George! I did not mean anything of the kind; but—but—kiss me, and say you have forgiven me—do!" and she rose and stepped towards him, with a forced smile. He gave her his cheek, with an air of sullen indifference, and said, "It's no use blubbering about misfortunes, and all that sort of thing. The fact is, something must be done, or ———, *I'm* done! Look here, Jane! Bring your chair there a minute! What do you say to these?" He pulled out of his pocket a crumpled mass of papers—bills which had been sent in during the week, some of them of several months' standing—£70 were due for wine and spirits; £90 for articles of his dress; £35 for the use of a horse and tilbury; £10 for cigars and snuffs; and, in short, the above are a sample of items which swelled into the gross amount of more than £300—all due—all from creditors who refused him longer credit, and all for articles which had ministered *nothing* to his poor wife's comforts or necessities. She burst into tears as she looked over the bills scattered on the table, and, flinging her arms round her husband's neck, implored him to pay more attention to business.

"I tell you, I *do*," he replied impatiently, suffering, not returning, her affectionate embrace.

"Well, dearest George! I don't mean to blame you"——

"You had better not, indeed!" he replied coldly; "but what's to be done, eh?—That's what we ought to be considering. Do you think—hem! Jane—could you, do you think"——He paused, and seemed embarrassed.

"Could I *what*, dear George?" she inquired, squeezing his hands.

"D'ye think—d'ye think—but—no—I'll ask you some other day!" and he rose from his chair. What will be imagined was his request? She learnt some days afterwards, that it was for her to use her influence with her aunt, an old widow lady, to lend him £500. To return, however.

He was standing opposite the fire, in moody contemplation, when a rude puppy, dressed in the extreme of the fashion, with three different coloured waistcoats on—crossed and recrossed by a heavy pewter-looking chain—and a glossy new hat, with tapering crown, stuck with an impudent air on the left side of his head—burst unceremoniously into the parlour, and disturbed the sorrowful *tête-à-tête* of T—— and his wife, by rushing up to the former, shaking his hands, and exclaiming boisterously—"Ah! T——, how d'ye do, d—e? Bill Bunce's *Chaffer* has beat ——; he has by ——! I've won £15 on it!—Oh! a thousand pardons, ma'am—I didn't see you; but there's been a great dog-fight you see, and I have been luckier than what Mr T—— here has; for I've won £15, and he has lost £20!"

This scoundrel was one of T——'s bosom friends! Ay, incredible as it may seem, it was for such worthless fellows, such despicable blockheads as these, that Mr T—— had squandered his generous wife's property and forsaken her company! On the present occasion,—a sample of what had occurred so often as to cause—no surprise—nothing but a gush of bitter tears after he was gone,—T—— civilly bade

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her good-morning, departed arm-in-arm with his "friend," and did not return till past two o'clock in the morning, almost dead drunk. Had he seen how the remainder of the day was spent by his poor wife—in tears and terror—unsoothed by the thought that her husband was absent on errands of honourable employment — content with making a scanty dinner of that at which the servant "turned up her nose," as the phrase is—and sitting the rest of the evening, sewing and shedding tears by turns, till the hour of midnight warned her to retire to a sleepless bed; could he have felt the hurried beatings of her heart whenever her wakeful ear fancied she heard the sound of his approaching footsteps on the pavement beneath; could he have done this, he might not *possibly*, on waking in the morning, have called her a ——, nor STRUCK HER on the mouth till her under lip was half cut through, for presuming to rouse him before he had slept off the fumes of the brandy, and all he had drunk overnight—in order that he might be in time for a consultation appointed for eleven o'clock. *He did do this;* and I was the first person on earth to whom she reluctantly told it—on her death-bed!

Though her delicate and interesting situation—within a very few weeks of her accouchement—might have kindled a spark of tenderness and pride in the bosom of any husband who had not lost all the feelings of honour and manliness, it sufficed, apparently, to inspire T—— with a determination to treat her more unkindly and neglectfully than ever. She scarcely ever saw him during the day; and when he came home at night—more than once conducted by the watchman—he was almost invariably stupified with liquor; and if he had the power of utterance, he seemed to take a demoniacal pleasure in venting upon her the foulest expressions which he could recollect being used by the riff-raff of the taverns, where he spent his time. More than once was she so horrified with what he said, that, at the peril of her life, she insisted on leaving him, and sharing the bed of the servant girl! Her wretched look might have broken a heart of stone; yet it affected not that of the wretch who called her his wife!

A few days after the occurrence above related, the maid-servant put a twopenny post letter into her mistress's hands; and fortunate it was for Mrs T—— that the girl happened to be in the room while she read it, awaiting orders for dinner. The note was in these words, written in a feigned but still a lady's hand:—

"UNFORTUNATE MADAM!—I feel it my duty to acquaint you that your husband, Mr T——, is pursuing quite disgraceful courses all night and day, squandering away his money among sharpers and blacklegs, and that he is persuaded to back one of the boxers in a great fight that is to be; and, above all, and what I blush to tell you—but it is fitting Mrs T—— should know it—in my opinion, Mr T—— is notoriously keeping a woman of infamous character, with whom he is constantly seen at the theatres and most other public places, and she passes as his *cousin*. Hoping that you will have prudence and spirit to act in this distressing business as becomes a lady and a wife, I am, madam, with the truest respect and sympathy,

A REAL FRIEND."

Mrs T—— read this cruel letter in silence—motionless—and with a face that whitened sensibly as she proceeded; till, at the disgraceful fact mentioned in the concluding part, she dropped the paper from her hands—and the servant ran to her in time to prevent her falling from her chair; for she had swooned! It was long before she came to; and, when that was the case, it was only that she might be carried to her bed—and she was confined that evening. The child was still-born! All this came on the husband like a thunder-stroke, and shocked him for a time into something like sobriety and compunction. The admirable qualities of his wife—her virtues and her meekness—shone before his startled eyes in angel hues. He forsook the scenes, a constant frequenting of which had rendered him un-

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worthy to live under the same roof with her, and betook himself to the regular pursuits of business with great earnestness. He soon found out what arduous up-hill work it was to bring again under his control affairs which had been so long and shamefully neglected. He felt several times disposed to throw it all over in disgust; for, alas! he had lost almost every vestige of the patience and accuracy of business habits. He succeeded, with great difficulty, in appeasing the more clamorous of his creditors, and, in a word, once more stood a chance of clearing his way before him. His poor wife, however, was brought several times to the very verge of the grave, and was destined for months to the monotonous hours of a bed of sickness. For nearly a month, she experienced the most affectionate attentions from her husband that were consistent with a due attention to the business of his office. She felt revived and cheered by the prospect of his renewed attachment, and trusted in its permanency. But, alas! her husband was not made of such materials as warranted her expectations; he was little else than a compound of weakness, vanity, ignorance, and ill-temper; and for such a one, the sober loveliness and attractiveness of domestic life had no charms. He had no sooner got his affairs a little into train, and succeeded in reviving the confidence of some of his principal clients, than he began to relax his efforts. One by one, his old associates drew around him, and re-entangled him in the toils of dissipation. The first time that poor ill-fated Mrs T—— came down into the parlour to dinner, after a three months' absence in her sick-chamber, she was doomed to dine alone—disappointed of the promised presence of her husband to welcome her; for the same low, contemptible coxcomb, formerly introduced to the reader as one of her husband's most intimate friends, had called in the course of the morning, and succeeded in enticing him away to a tavern dinner with a set "of good 'uns," who were afterwards to adjourn to one of the minor theatres. In vain was the little fillet of veal, ordered by her husband himself, placed on the table before his deserted wife; she could not taste it, nor had strength enough to carve a piece for the nurse! Mr T—— had had the grace to send her a note of apology, alleging that his absence was occasioned by "an affair of business!" This cruel and perfidious conduct, however, met with its due punishment. One of his principal creditors —his tailor—happened to be swallowing a hasty dinner in a box adjoining the one in which T—— and his boisterous associates were dining, and accidentally cast eyes on his debtor T——. He saw and heard enough to fill him with fury; for he had heard his own name mentioned by the half-inebriated debtor, as one of the "*served-out snips*" whom he intended to "do" —an annunciation which was received by the gentlemanly young men who were dining with him, with cries of "Bravo, T——, do! D—e, I—and I —and I—have done it before this!"

The next morning he was arrested for a debt of £110, at the suit of the very "snip" whom he intended, in his own witty way, to "do," and carried off to a spunging-house in Chancery Lane. There he lay for two days without his wife's knowing anything of the true state of things. He could get no one to stand bail for him, till one of his wife's insulted friends, and his own brother-in-law, came forward reluctantly for that purpose, in order to calm her dreadful agitation, which had flung her again on a sick-bed. Her husband wrote her a most penitential letter from the spunging-house, imploring her forgiveness for his misconduct, and promising amendment. Again she believed him, and welcomed him home with enthusiastic demonstrations of fondness. He himself could not refrain from weeping; he sobbed and cried like a child; for his feelings—what with the most pungent sense of disgrace, remorse, and conscious unworthiness of the sweet creature, whose affections no misconduct of his seemed capable of alienating—were quite overcome. Three of his chief creditors commenced actions against

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him, and nothing seemed capable of arresting the ruin now impending over him. Where was he to find the means of satisfying their claims? He was in despair; and had sullenly and stupidly come to a resolution to let things take their course, when, as if Providence had determined to afford the miserable man one chance more of retrieving his circumstances, the sudden death of his father put him in possession of £800 in ready cash; and this sum, added to £200 advanced him by two of his wife's friends, who could not resist her agonising supplications, once more set matters to rights.

* * * *

Passing over an interval of four years, spent with disgrace to himself, and anguish to his wife, similar to that described above, they must now be presented to the reader, occupying, alas! a lower station of society. They had been compelled to relinquish an airy, respectable, and commodious residence, for a small, bad house, in a worse neighbourhood. His business had dwindled down to what was insufficient to occupy the time of one solitary clerk, whom he was scarcely able to pay regularly—and the more respectable of his friends had utterly deserted him in disgust. The most rigorous—nay, almost starving—economy, on the part of his wife, barely sufficed to "make both ends meet." She abridged herself of almost every domestic comfort, of all those little elegances which a well-bred woman loves to keep about her—and did so without a murmur. The little income arising from the £5000, her settlement money, might surely, of itself, with only ordinary prudence on his part, have enabled them to maintain their ground with something like respectability, especially if he had attended to what remained of his business. But, alas! alas! T——'s temper had, by this time, been thoroughly and permanently soured. He hated his good wife—his business—his family—himself—everything, except liquor and low company! His features bore testimony to the sort of life he led—swelled, bloated, and his eyes languid and bloodshot. Mrs T—— saw less of him than ever; for, not far from his house, there was a small tavern, frequented by none but the meanest underlings of his profession; and there was T—— to be found, evening after evening, smoking and drinking himself into a state of stupid insensibility, till he would return home redolent of the insufferable stench and fumes of tobacco smoke, and brandy-and-water. In the daytime, he was often to be found for hours together at an adjoining billiard-room, where he sometimes lost sums of money, which his poor wife was obliged to make up for by parting, one by one, with her little trinkets and jewellery! What could have infatuated him to pursue such a line of conduct? it may be asked—why, as if of set purpose, ruin the peace of mind of one of the fondest and most amiable wives that ever man was blessed with? A vulgar, but forcible expression, may explain all—it was "the nature of the beast." He had no intellectual pleasures—no taste for the quiet enjoyments of home; and had, above all, in his wife, too sweet, confiding, and unresisting a creature! Had she proved a termagant, the aspect of things might have been very different; *she* might have *bullied* him into something like a sense of propriety. Here, however, he had it all his own way—a poor creature, who allowed him to break her heart without remonstrance or reproach; for the first she *dared* not—the second she could not. It would have broken a heart of stone to see her! She was wasted to a skeleton, and in such a weak, declining state of health, that she could scarcely stir out of doors. Her appetite was almost entirely gone; her spirits all fled long ago!—Now, shall I tell the reader *one* immediate cause of such physical exhaustion? I will, and truly.

Mr T—— had still a tolerable share of business; but he could scarcely be brought to give more than two hours' attendance in his office a-day, and sometimes not even that. He therefore imprudently left almost everything to the management of his clerk, a worthy young man, but wholly in-

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competent to such a charge. He had extorted from even his idle and unworthy master frequent acknowledgments of his obligations for the punctuality with which he transacted all that was intrusted to him; and, in particular, for the neatness, accuracy, and celerity with which he copied drafts of pleadings, leases, agreements, &c. His master often hiccoughed to him his astonishment at the rapidity with which he "turned them out of hand;" but how little did the unworthy fellow imagine that, in saying all this, he was uttering, not his clerk's, but his WIFE's praises! For *she* it was, poor creature! who, having taken the pains to learn a lawyer's hand, engrossing, &c., from the clerk, actually sat up, almost regularly, till two or three o'clock in the morning, plodding perseveringly through papers and parchments—making long and laborious extracts—engrossing settlements, indentures, &c., and copying pleadings, till her wearied eyes, and her little hands, could no longer perform their office! I could at this moment lay my hands on a certain legal instrument, of tiresome prolixity, which was engrossed, every word, by Mrs T——!

*This* was the way in which his wife spent the hours of midnight, and to enable him to squander away his time and money in the unworthy, the infamous manner above related!

Was it wonderful that her health and spirits were wholly borne down by the pressure of so many accumulated ills? Had not her husband's eye been dulled, and his perceptions deadened, by the perpetual stupors of intoxication, he might have discerned the hectic flush—the coming fever—the blood-spitting, which foretell consumption! But that was too much to be expected. As for the evenings—they were invariably spent at his favourite tavern, sotting hour after hour among its lowest frequenters; and as for her night-cough and blood-spitting, he was lulled by liquor into too profound a repose to be roused by the sounds which were, in effect, his martyred wife's death-knell. If, during the day-time, he was in a manner forced to remark her languor—her drooping spirits—the only notice, the only sympathy it called forth on his part, was a cold and careless inquiry why she did not call in a medical man! I shall conclude this portion of my narrative with barely reciting four instances of that conduct on the part of Mrs T——'s husband, which at last succeeded in breaking her heart, and which, with many other similar ones, were communicated to me with tears of tortured sensibility.

I. Half drunk, half sober, he one evening introduced to her, at tea, a female "friend," whose questionable appearance might, at first sight, have justified his wife's refusal to receive her. Her conversation soon disclosed her real character; and the insulted wife abruptly retired from the room that was polluted by the presence of the infamous creature whom he avowed to be *his mistress!* He sprung after her to the door, for the purpose of dragging her back; but her sudden paleness, and the faint tones in which she whispered—"Don't stop me—don't—or I shall die!" so shocked him, that he allowed her to retire, and immediately dismissed the wretch, whom he could have brought thither for no other purpose than to insult his wife! Poor creature! did a portion of her midnight earnings go towards the support of the wretch who was kept by her husband?

II. Having occasion, late one evening, to rummage among her husband's office papers, in search of something which was to be engrossed that night, her eye happened to light on a document, with a pencil superscription—"*Copy, case for counsel, concerning Mrs T——'s marriage settlement.*" A very excusable curiosity prompted her to peruse what proved to be a series of queries submitted to counsel, on the following points, among others:—What present powers he had under her marriage settlement?—whether her own interest in it could be legally made over to another, with her consent, during her lifetime? and, if so, how?—whether or not he could part with the reversion, provided she did not exercise her power of willing it

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away elsewhere? From all this, was it possible for her not to see how heartlessly he was calculating on the best method of obtaining possession of the remnant of her fortune?

"Oh, cruel—cruel—cruel George! So impatient!—Could you not wait a month or two? I'm sure I shall not keep you out of it long! I always intended to leave it to you, and I won't let this alter my mind, though it *is* cruel of you!" sobbed Mrs T——, till her heart seemed breaking. At that moment she heard her husband's loud obstreperous knock at the door, and hastily crumpling up the paper into the drawer of the desk, from which she had taken it, she put out the candle, and, leaving her midnight labours, flew up-stairs to bed—to a wretched and sleepless one!

III. Mrs T——'s child, which was about three years and a half old, was suddenly seized with convulsive fits, as she was one evening undressing it for bed. Fit after fit followed in such rapid succession, that the medical man who was summoned in prepared her to expect the worst. The distraction of her feelings may be easier conceived than described, as she held on her knee the little creature on whose life were centred all the proud and fond feelings of a mother's love, deepeñed into exclusive intensity; for it seemed the only object on earth to return her love;—as she held it, I say, but with great difficulty, for its tiny limbs were struggling and plunging about in a dreadful manner. And then the frightful rolling of the eyes! They were endeavouring to pour a teaspoonful of Dalby's carminative, or some such medicine, through the closed teeth, when the room door was suddenly thrown open, and in reeled Mr T——, more than half-seas over with liquor, and in a merrier mood than usual, for he had been successful at billiards! He had entered unobserved through the street door, which had been left ajar by the distracted servant girl; and, hearing a bustle in the room, he had entered, for the purpose of seeing what was the matter.

"Wh—wh—what is the matter, good fo—olks, eh?" he stammered, reeling towards where Mrs T—— was sitting, almost fainting with terror at seeing the frightful contortions of her infant's countenance. She saw him not, for her eyes were fixed in agony on the features of her suffering babe.

"What the—the—the d—l is the matter with all of you here, eh?" he inquired, chucking the servant girl under the chin, who, much agitated, and shedding tears, had approached, to beg he would leave the room. He tried to kiss her, and in the presence of the medical man—who sternly rebuked him for his monstrous conduct.

"D—n you, sir—who the devil are *you?*" he said, putting his arms a-kimbo —"I *will* know what's the matter!" He came near—he saw all!—the leaden-hued, quivering features—the limbs, now rigid, then struggling violently —the starting eyeballs.

"Why, for God's sake, what's the matter, eh?" he stammered almost inaudibly, while the colour fled from his face, and the perspiration started upon his forehead. He strove to steady himself; but that was impossible. He had drunk too deeply.

"What are you doing to the child—what—what?" he again inquired, in a feeble and faltering voice, interrupted by a hiccough. No notice whatever was taken of him by his wife, who did not seem to see or hear him. "Jane, tell me," addressing her again, "has the child had—(hickup)—an—an—ac—ci—dent?" The infant that moment gave a sudden and final plunge; and Mrs T——'s faint shriek, and the servant girl's wringing of the hands, announced that all was over! The little thing lay dead in the arms of its mother.

"Sir, your child is dead," said the apothecary sternly, shaking Mr T—— by the arm—for he stood gazing on the scene with a sullen, vacant stare, scarcely able to steady himself.

"Wh—wh—at! *D—e—a—d?*" he muttered with a ghastly air.

"Oh! George, my darling is—is dead!" groaned the afflicted mother, for the first time looking at and addressing her husband. The word seemed to sober him in an instant.

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"What?—Dead? And I DRUNK!"

The medical man, who stood by, told me he could never forget the scene of that evening! When Mrs T—— discovered, by his manner, his disgraceful condition, she was so utterly overcome with her feelings of mingled grief, shame, and horror, that she fell into violent hysterics, which lasted almost all night long. As for T——, he seemed palsied all the next day. He sat alone during the whole of the morning, in the room where the dead infant lay, gazing upon it with emotions which may be imagined, but not described.

IV. Almost the only piece of ornamental furniture, her last remaining means of amusement and consolation, was her piano. She played with both taste and feeling, and many a time contrived to make sweet sounds pour an oblivious charm over her sorrows and sufferings, by wandering over the airs which she had loved in happier days. Thus was she engaged one afternoon with one of Dr Arne's exquisite compositions, the air beginning, "Blow, blow, thou winter's wind." She made several attempts to accompany the music with her voice—for she once had a very sweet one, and *could* sing—but whenever she attempted, the words seemed to choke her. There was a sorrowful appropriateness in them, a touching echo of her own feelings, which dissolved her very spirit within her. Her only child had died, as the reader was informed, about six months before, and her husband had resumed his ill courses, becoming more and more stern and sullen in his demeanour—more unreasonable in his requirements. The words of the air, as may be easily conceived, were painfully appropriate to her situation, and she could not help shedding tears. At that moment her husband entered the room with his hat on, and stood for some moments before the fire in silence.

"Mrs T——!" said he, as soon as she had concluded the last stanza.

"Well, George!" said she, in a mild tone.

"I—I must *sell that piano*, ma'am—I must!" said he.

"What!" exclaimed his wife, in a low whisper, turning round on the music-stool, and looking him in the face with an air of sorrowful surprise. "Oh! you cannot be in earnest, George!"

"'Pon my life, ma'am, but I am—I can't indulge you with superfluities while we can hardly afford the means of keeping body and soul together."

"George—dear George—do forgive me, but I—I—I *cannot* part with my poor piano," said she.

"Why not, ma'am, when *I* say you MUST!"

"Oh! because it was the gift of my poor mother!" she replied, bursting into tears.

"Can't help that, ma'am—not I. It must go. I hate to hear its cursed noise in the house—it makes me melancholy—it does, ma'am—you're always playing such gloomy music," replied the husband, in a severe and less decisive tone.

"Well, well! if that's all, I'll play anything you like—only tell me, dear George! what shall I play for you now?" said she, rising from the music-stool and approaching him.

"Play a farewell to the piano, for it *must* go, and it shall!" he replied desperately.

"Dear, kind George! let me keep it a little longer," said she, looking him beseechingly in the face—"a little—a *little* longer"——

"Well, ma'am, sit down and play away till I come in again, anything you like."

He left the room, and in less than half an hour—oh, hardness of heart unheard of!—returned with a stranger, who proved to be a furniture-broker, come to value the instrument! That evening it was sold to him for £15, and it was carried away the first thing in the morning, before his wife came down stairs! What will be supposed the occasion of this cruelty? It was to furnish Mr T—— with money to pay a bill of the infamous creature more than once alluded to, and who had obtained a complete ascendancy over him!

It was a long-continued course of such treatment as this that called *me* upon the scene, in a professional capacity, merely, at first, till the mournful

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countenance of my patient inspired me with feelings of concern and friendly sympathy, which eventually led to an entire confidence. She came to me in the unostentatious character of a morning patient, in a hackney-coach, with an elderly female friend. She looked quite the lady, though her dress was but of an ordinary quality, yet exquisitely neat and clean; and she had still a very interesting and somewhat pretty face, though long-continued sorrow had made sad havoc with her features! These visits, at intervals of a week, she paid me, and compelled me to take my fee of one guinea on each occasion—though I would have given *two* to be enabled to decline it without hurting her delicacy. Though her general health had suffered severely, still I thought that matters had not gone quite so far as to destroy all hopes of recovery, with due attention; though her cheeks disclosed, almost every evening, the death-rose—the grave-flower—of hectic, and night-sweats and a faint cough were painfully regular in their recurrence, still I saw nothing, for a long time, to warrant me in warning her of serious danger. I insisted on her allowing me to visit her at her own house, and she at last permitted me, on condition that I would receive, at least, half-a-guinea—poor creature!—for every visit. That, however, I soon dropped; and I saw her almost every day gratuitously, whenever any temporary aggravations of her symptoms required my attendance. The first time I saw her husband, I could not help taking a prejudice against him, though she had never breathed a syllable to me of his ill conduct. He was apparently about forty years old, though his real age was not more than two or three-and-thirty. His manners and habits had left a sufficiently strong impress upon him to enable a casual beholder to form a shrewd conjecture as to his character. His features, once rather handsome than otherwise, were now reddened and swollen with long-continued excess; and there was altogether an air of truculence—of vulgar assurance and stupid sullenness about him, which prepossessed me strongly against him. When, long afterwards, Mrs T—— gave me that description of his appearance and manners under which he is first placed before the reader of this narrative, I could not help frequently interrupting her with expressions of incredulity, and reminding her of his present ill-favoured looks; but as she went on with her sad story, my scepticism vanished. Personal deterioration was no incredible attendant on moral declension! * * *

*March* 28, 18—.—There can be no longer any doubt as to the nature of Mrs T——'s symptoms. She is the destined victim of consumption. The oftener I go to her house, the stronger are my suspicions that she is an unhappy woman, and that her husband ill-uses her. I have many times tried to hint my suspicions to her, but she will declare nothing. She *will* not understand me. Her settled despondency, however, accompanied with an under-current of feverish nervous trepidation, which she cannot satisfactorily explain, convinces me something or other is wrong. I see very little of her husband, for he is scarcely ever in her company when I call. Though his profession is that of an attorney, and his house and office are one, I see scarcely any indications of business stirring. I am afraid they are in sinking circumstances. I am *sure* that she, at least, was born and bred for a station superior to that she now occupies. Her manners have that simplicity, ease, and elegance, which tell of a higher rank in society. I often detect her alone in tears, over a low fire. In a word, I am sure she is wretched, and that her husband is the cause of it. That he keeps late hours, I *know*, for she happened to let slip as much one day to me, when I was making inquiries about the time of her retiring to sleep. I feel a great interest in her; for, whenever I see her, she reminds me of "Patience on a monument, smiling at Grief"—of

> Sorrow deck'd
> In the poor faded garb of tarnish'd joy,
> Ill fitting to her wasted form.

*April 5th.*—To-day I found them

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both together, sitting one on each side of the fireplace, he smoking—in the parlour; and she, with a little needle-work in her lap. I thought he seemed somewhat embarrassed at my entrance; which probably had put an end to some scene of unpleasantness, for her face was suffused with crimson. *It* soon retired, however, and left the wanness to which I had been accustomed in her.

"So, my wife's ill, sir, it seems?" said Mr T—— abruptly, putting his pipe on the hob.

"I'm sorry to say she *is*, Mr T——," I replied, "and that she is worse today than she has been for some time."

Mrs T—— let fall tears.

"Sorry to hear you say so, doctor; I've just been telling her it's all owing to her own *obstinacy* in not calling earlier on ——."

"I think you might have used a milder word, sir," said I, with involuntary sternness, at the same time directing my attention exclusively to his wife—as if for the purpose of hinting the propriety of his retiring.

"What's the matter with her, sir?" he inquired, in a more respectful tone than he had hitherto assumed.

"General debility, sir, and occasional pain," said I, coldly.

"What's it owing to?"

I looked suddenly at Mrs T——; our eyes met—and hers had an expression of apprehension. I determined, however, to give a hint that I suspected all was not right, and replied—"I fear she does not take suitable nourishment, keeps irregular hours, and has something or other on her mind which harasses her." The latter words I accompanied with a steady look into his face. He seemed a little flushed.

"You're mistaken, sir," said he, with a *brusque* air; "she may eat what she likes—that I can afford—may go to bed at what hour she likes—and it's all her own fault that she will sit moping over the fire, night after night, and week after week, waiting for my return, till two or three o'clock in the morning"——

"*That* is, of itself, sufficient to account for her illness," said I, pointedly. He began to lose his temper, for he saw the shameful acknowledgment he had unwittingly made. "Pray, Mrs T——," he inquired, looking angrily at his wife, who sat pale and trembling by my side—"*have* you anything on your mind, eh? If so—why, speak out—no sneaking!"

"No!" she stammered; "and I never said I had, I assure you. Did I ever give you even the most distant hint of the kind, doctor?" she continued, appealing to me.

"By no means, madam, not in the slightest, on any occasion," I replied; "it was only a conjecture—a suspicion of my own." I thought he looked as if he would have made some instant reply, for his eye glared furiously on me. He bit his lips, however, and continued silent. His conscience "pricked him." I began to feel uneasy about the future quiet of Mrs T——, lest any observations of mine should have excited her husband's suspicions that she had made disclosures to me of family matters.

"What would you advise for her, sir?" he asked coldly.

"Removal for a few weeks to the sea-side, a liberal diet, and lively society."

"Very well, sir," said he, after a puzzled pause; "very good, sir—very; it shall be attended to. Perhaps you want to be alone—eh?—So I'll leave you!" and, directing a peculiar look towards his wife, as if warning her against something or other, he left the room. She burst into tears directly he was gone.

"My dear madam, forgive me for saying that I suspect your husband's behaviour towards you is somewhat harsh, and, perhaps, *unkind*," said I, in as soothing a tone as I could command, and pressing her hand kindly into mine.

"Oh, no, doctor—no!" she replied; adding abruptly, in an altered manner, indicating displeasure, "what makes you think so, sir?"

"Why, madam, simply because I cannot shut my eyes or my ears to what passes even while I am here;

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as for instance, only just now, madam —just now."

She sighed, and made me no reply. I told her I was in earnest in recommending the course I had mentioned to her husband.

"Oh dear, doctor, no, no!—we could not afford it," said she, with a sigh. At that moment her husband returned, and resumed his former seat in sullen silence. I soon after took my departure.

*April 7th.*—Does not the following make one blush for one's species? I give it nearly as I received it from the lips of Mrs T——. Inestimable woman! why are you fated to endure such pangs?

About twelve o'clock at noon, hearing her husband come in, and thinking from his looks, of which she caught a casual and hasty glance through the window, that he was fatigued, and stood in need of some refreshment, she poured out a glass of port wine, almost the last in a solitary bottle which she had purchased, under my directions, for medicinal purposes, and, with a biscuit, brought it herself down stairs, though the effort so exhausted her feeble frame, that she was obliged to sit down for several moments on the last stair, to recover her breath. At last she ventured to knock at the door of the back office where he was sitting, holding the little waiter with the glass of wine and the biscuit in her left hand.

"Who's there?" inquired the gruff voice of T——.

"It's only I, my dear. May I come in, please?" replied the gentle voice of the wife.

"What brings *you* here, eh?—What the d—l do you want with me now?" said he, surlily.

"I've brought you something, my dear," she replied, and ventured to open the door. T—— was sitting before some papers or parchments, alone, and his countenance showed that he was in a worse humour than usual. On seeing her errand, he suddenly rose from his chair, exclaiming, in an angry tone—"What the —— brings you here in this way, plaguing me while engaged at business, you ——! —Eh, woman?" and, Oh, my God! in a sudden fit of fury he struck the waiter, wine, biscuit, and all, out of her trembling hands to the floor, rudely pushed her out of the room, and slammed the door violently in her face. He did not re-open it, though he could not but have heard her fall upon the floor, the shock was so sudden and violent.

There, stretched across the mat, at the bottom of the staircase, lay that suffering creature, unable to rise, till her stifled sobbings brought the servant girl to her assistance.

"I can't help saying it's most abominable usage of you, ma'am; it is—and I don't care if master hears me say so neither," said the girl, herself crying; "for I'm sure he isn't worthy of the very shoes you wear—he isn't." She was endeavouring to lift her mistress, when Mrs T—— suddenly burst into a loud unnatural laugh, and went off into violent hysterics. Mr T——, hearing the noise of talking and laughing, sprung to the door, threw it open, and shouted to them to be "off with their noise — disturbing business!" but the piteous spectacle of his prostrate wife stopped him; and, almost petrified with horror, he knelt down for the purpose of assisting her all he could.

* * *

About an hour after this occurrence, I happened to call, and found her lying in bed, alone, her husband having left her on business. When the servant told me—and her mistress reluctantly corroborated what she said—the circumstances above related, I felt such indignation swelling my whole frame, that, had he been within reach, I could not have resisted caning the scoundrel within an inch of his unworthy life! The recollection of this occurrence tortures me even now, and I can hardly believe that such brutality as T——'s could have been shown by man!

Mrs T—— kept her room from that hour, and never left it till she was carried out for burial! But this is anticipating.



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*April* 8*th*, 9*th*, 10*th*, 11*th*.—I see clearly that poor Mrs T—— will never rise from her bed again. She has drained the bitter cup of grief to the dregs! She is one of the meekest sufferers I ever had for a patient. She says little to me or to any one; and shows a regard—a love for her unworthy husband, which, I think, can be called by no other name than absolute infatuation. I have never yet heard her breathe a hint to his disadvantage. He is not much with her; and, from what little I have seen, I feel convinced that his eyes are opening to a sense of the flagrant iniquity of his past conduct. And what are the effects produced by his feelings of shame and remorse? He endeavours to forget all in the continual stupor induced by liquor!

*April* 12*th*.—Mrs T—— delirious. Raved while I was there about her child—convulsions—said something about "cruel of Mr T—— to be drunk while his child lay dying;" and said many other things which shocked me unutterably, and convinced me that her primary disorder was—a broken heart. I am sure she must have endured a series of brutal usage from her husband.

*April* 13*th*.—The whole house upside down—in disorder and confusion from the top to the bottom—for there is an *execution* in it, and the officers and an appraiser are making an inventory of the furniture—poor, poor Mrs T—— lying all the while on her deathbed! The servant told me afterwards, that her mistress, hearing strange steps and voices, called to know what was the cause; and, on receiving word of the real state of matters, lifted up her hands, burst into an agony of weeping, and prayed that the Almighty would be pleased to remove her from such a scene of wretchedness. T—— himself, I learned, was sitting cowering over the kitchen fire, crying like a child! Brute! coward! fool!

Such was the state of things at the time of my arrival. I was inconceivably shocked, and hurried to Mrs T——'s room with unusual haste and trepidation. I found her in tears—sobbing, and exclaiming, "Why won't they let us rest a little? why strip the house before I am gone? can they not wait a little? where, where is Mr T——?"

I could not for several minutes speak myself, for tears. At length I succeeded in allaying her excitement and agitation. At her request, I sent for the appraiser into her room. He came, and seemed a respectable and feeling man.

"Are you bent upon stripping the house, sir, while this lady is lying in her present dangerous state?"

"Indeed, sir, indeed, sir," replied the man with considerable emotion—"I'm sorry for it—very; but it is my duty—duty—ordered"—he continued confusedly; "if I had my own way, sir"——

"But at least you need not approach this chamber, sir," said I, rather sternly. He stammered something like the words, "obliged—sorry—court of law," &c. Mrs T—— again burst into an agony of tears.

"Retire, sir, for the present," said I in an authoritative tone, "and we will send for you soon." I then entered into conversation with my poor persecuted patient, and she told me of the £5000 settled to her separate use, and which she intended, under a power in the deed of settlement, to will to her husband. I spontaneously promised to stand security for the satisfaction of the execution, provided the creditors would defer proceedings for three months. She blessed me for it! This, however, I afterwards learned, would be illegal—at least so I was told; and I therefore wrote a cheque on my banker for the amount awarded by the court, and thus put an end to distress from that quarter. At Mrs T——'s urgent request, I returned to her bedside that evening. I found a table with writing materials placed before a chair, in which she begged me to be seated. She then dictated to me her will, in which, after deducting the sum I had advanced in satisfaction of the execution, and leaving me in addition sufficient to purchase a plain mourning ring, she bequeathed the whole, absolutely and unreservedly,

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to her husband; and added, my hand shaking while I wrote it down, "hoping that he will use it prudently, and not entirely forget me when I am gone. And if he should—if he should;" her utterance was choked—"and if he should—*marry again;*" again she paused.

"Dear, dear madam! compose yourself! Take time! This dreadful agitation will accelerate the event we are all dreading!" said I.

"No—don't fear. I beg you will go on!—If he should marry again, may he use her—use her—No, no, no!—strike all the last clause out! Give me the pen!" I did as she directed me—struck out from the words, "and if he should," &c., and put the pen into her hand. With trembling fingers she traced the letters of her name; I witnessed it, and she said, "Now, is all right?"—"Yes, madam," I replied. She then burst into a flood of tears, exclaiming, "Oh, George! George! this will show you that, however tired you may have grown of *me*, I have loved you to the end—I have—I have—!" She burst into louder weeping. "Oh! it's hard, it's very hard to part with him, though he *might*—he *might* have used me—No!" She paused. I suffered her excited feelings to grow calm; and, after some time spent in endeavouring to soothe her, I took my departure, after witnessing one of the most heart-breaking scenes I have ever encountered. Her husband could not be prevailed on to enter her room that day; but all night long, I was told, he sat outside the door, on one of the steps of the stairs, and more than once startled her with his sighs.

*April 14th to May 6th.*—Sinking rapidly. I shall be astonished if she survive a week. She is comparatively in a happy frame of mind, and has availed herself of the consolations of religion to happy purpose. On this day (May 6th) I succeeded in extracting from her the facts which compose the former part of this narrative. Her gentle palliating way of telling it, divested the conduct of her husband of almost all blame-worthiness! She will not allow me to make a harsh or condemnatory comment all the way through! She censured *herself* as she went on; accused herself of want of firmness; said she was afraid Mr T—— had been disappointed in her disposition; said that, if he HAD done anything wrong, it was owing to the bad companions who had enticed him from the path of duty into that of dissipation; that he had not exactly *neglected* her, or wilfully ill-used her; but—but—'twas all in vain—she could say nothing to extenuate his guilt, and I begged her not! I left her, in tears myself.

O woman! woman! woman! "We had been brutes without you," and the mean and miserable T—— was a brute *with* you!

*May 8th.*—Mrs T—— wasted to a shadow; all the horrors of consumption! Her husband, though apparently broken-hearted, cannot, though probably no one will believe it—he *cannot* refrain from frequenting the public-house! He pretends that his spirits are so low, so oppressed, that he requires the aid of stimulating liquors! Mrs T—— made me promise this morning that I would see her coffin closed; and a small locket, containing a portion of her child's and husband's hair, placed next her heart. I nodded acquiescence, for my tongue refused me words. I felt choked.

*10th.*—I was summoned this evening to witness the exit from our world of one of the sweetest, loveliest spirits, that it was, and is, unworthy of! I was sent for, not under the apprehension that her end was at hand, but on account of some painful symptoms which had manifested themselves since my visit in the morning. It was about nine o'clock when I arrived, and found her in a flow of spirits very unexpected, and rather unusual in her situation. Her eye was bright, and she could talk with a clearness and rapidity of utterance, to which she had long been a stranger. She told me that she had been awakened from sleep by hearing the sound of sweet singing, which, I need hardly say, was wholly imaginary. She was in a very happy frame

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of mind; but evidently in a state of dangerous excitement. Her sottish husband was sitting opposite the fire, his face entirely hid in his hands; and he maintained a stupid silence, undisturbed even by my entrance. Mrs T—— thanked me, in almost enthusiastic terms, for my attention to her throughout her illness, and regretted that I would not allow her to testify her sense of it, by leaving me a trifling legacy.

"George—George!" she exclaimed, with sudden and startling energy—an impetuosity of tone, which brought him in an instant, with an affrighted air, to the foot of the bed.

"George, I've a message FROM HEAVEN for you! Listen—God will never bless you, unless you alter your courses!" The man shrunk and trembled under the burning, overpowering glance of her eye. "Come, dearest," said she after a pause, in an altered tone, "Come—Doctor —— will let you sit beside me for a few moments!" I removed, and made way for him. She clasped his hand in hers.

"Well, George, we must part!" said she, closing her eyes, and breathing softly, but fast. Her husband sobbed like a child, with his face buried in his handkerchief.—"Do you forgive me?" he murmured, half choked with emotion.

"Yes, dear—dear—dearest husband! —God knows I do, from my heart! I forgive all the little you have ever grieved me about!"

"Oh, Jane—Jane—Jane!" groaned the man, suddenly stooping over the bed, and kissing her lips in an apparent ecstasy. He fell down on his knees, and cried bitterly.

"Rise, George, rise," said his wife faintly. He obeyed her, and she again clasped his hand in hers.

"George, are you here—are you?" she inquired, in a voice fainter and fainter.

"Here I am, love!—oh, look on me! —look on me!" He sobbed, gazing steadily on her features. "Say once more that you forgive me! Let me hear your dear, blessed voice once again—or—or"——

"I DO! Kiss me—kiss me," she murmured almost inaudibly; and her unworthy—her guilty—husband kissed away the last expiring breath of one of the loveliest and most injured women, whose hearts have been broken by a husband's brutality!

12*th*.—This evening I looked in at the house where my late patient lay dead, for the purpose of fulfilling my promise, and seeing her locket placed near her heart, and the coffin closed. I then went into the parlour, where sat the bereaved husband, in company with his clerk, who had, ever since his engagement, shown a deep regard and respect for Mrs T——. After I had sat some moments in their company—

"I've something on my mind, Mr T——," said the young man suddenly, with emotion, "which I shall not be happy till I've told you."

"What is it?" inquired his master languidly.

"Do you recollect how often you used to praise my draft-copying, and wondered how I got through so much work?"

"Why, yes, curse you, yes!" replied his master angrily; "what have you brought *that* up for now, eh?"

"To tell you, sir, that I did not deserve your praises"——

"Well—well—no more," interrupted his master impatiently.

"But I must, and *will* tell you, that it was all done by poor Mrs T——, who learned engrossing, and sat up whole nights together, writing, that you might not lose your business, till she was nearly blinded, poor, dear lady! and she would not ever let me tell you! But I shall take leave now to say," continued the young man, rising, and bursting into tears—"I shall make free to tell you, that you have behaved shamefully—brutally to her, and have broken her poor heart—you have—and God will remember and curse you for it!"—And he left the room, and never again entered the house, the scene of his beloved mistress's martyrdom.

Mr T—— listened to all this without uttering a word—his eyes dilated —and he presently burst into a fit of

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loud and lamentable weeping, which lasted long after I left the house; and that evening he attempted to commit *suicide*, like one before him, unable to endure the heavy smitings of a guilty conscience.

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THIS paper has excited some little attention, and in quarters where I devoutly hope it may be useful. Very many inquiries, also, have been made as to the veracity of its details. I would to Heaven that, for the honour of humanity, I could say the principal incidents narrated had no other basis than fiction! I solemnly assure you, reader, that they are true: I tell you, further, that to the best of my belief, the wretched husband *still lives!* More about *him* I cannot—dare not say. There are, *really*, many drafts of pleadings, and leases, &c., now extant, in the handwriting of the amiable and unfortunate lady whose sorrows are recorded above, and which have now met with sympathy, I trust, from thousands. Another incident, which has been considered *improbably* atrocious and brutal—that of pushing down the poor wife, with her refreshments—is also true; and the Editor further assures you, reader, that, even were this portion of the narrative fictitious, *he* saw in private life a brutal husband act similarly towards his wife—a beautiful woman, and affectionate wife!

Woe, however, to the man of quick and delicate feeling, that looks closely on even the commonest scenes of life! How much must he see to shock and wound his heart—to disgust him with his species! But "the eyes of the *swinish* see not, neither do their hearts feel."

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# CHAPTER XVI.

## GRAVE DOINGS.

MY gentle reader—start not at learning that I have been, in my time, a RESURRECTIONIST. Let not this appalling word, this humiliating confession, conjure up in your fancy a throng of vampire-like images and associations, or earn your "Physician's" dismissal from your hearts and hearths. It is your own groundless fears, my fair trembler!—your own superstitious prejudices—that have driven me, and will drive many others of my brethren, to such dreadful doings as those hereafter detailed. Come, come—let us have one word of reason between us on the abstract question—and then for my tale. You expect us to cure you of disease, and yet deny us the only means of learning *how!* You would have us bring you the ore of skill and experience, yet forbid us to break the soil, or sink a shaft! Is this fair, *fair* reader? Is this reasonable?

What I am now going to describe was my first and last exploit in the way of body-stealing. It was a grotesque if not a ludicrous scene, and occurred during the period of my "walking the hospitals," as it is called, which occupied the two seasons immediately after my leaving Cambridge. A young, and rather interesting female, was admitted a patient at the hospital I attended; her case baffled all our skill, and her symptoms even defied diagnosis. *Now*, it seemed an enlargement of the heart—now, an ossification—then this, that, and the other; and, at last, it was plain we knew nothing at all about the matter—no, not even whether her disorder was organic or functional, primary or symptomatic—

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or whether it *was* really the heart that was at fault. She received no benefit at all under the fluctuating schemes of treatment we pursued, and, at length, fell into dying circumstances. As soon as her friends were apprised of her situation, and had an inkling of our intention to open the body, they insisted on removing her immediately from the hospital, that she might "die at home." In vain did Sir —— and his dressers expostulate vehemently with them, and represent, in exaggerated terms, the imminent peril attending such a step. Her two brothers avowed their apprehension of our designs, and were inflexible in exercising their right of removing their sister. I used all my rhetoric on the occasion, but in vain; and, at last, said to the young men, "Well, if you are afraid only of our *dissecting* her, we can get hold of her, if we are so disposed, as easily if she die with you as with us."

"Well — we'll *troy* that, measter," replied the elder, while his Herculean fist oscillated somewhat significantly before my eyes. The poor girl was removed accordingly to her father's house, which was at a certain village, about five miles from London, and survived her arrival scarcely ten minutes! We soon contrived to receive intelligence of the event; and as I and Sir ——'s two dressers had taken great interest in the case throughout, and felt intense curiosity about the real nature of the disease, we met together and entered into a solemn compact, that, come what might, we would have her body out of the ground. A trusty spy informed us of the time and exact place of the girl's burial; and on expressing to Sir —— our determination about the matter, he patted me on the back, saying, "Ah, my fine fellow!— IF you have SPIRIT enough — dangerous," &c. &c. Was it not skilfully said? The baronet further told us, he felt himself so curious about the matter, that if fifty pounds would be of use to us in furthering our purpose, they were at our service. It needed not this, nor a glance at the *éclat* with which the successful issue of the affair would be attended among our fellow-students, to spur our resolves.

The notable scheme was finally adjusted at my rooms in the Borough. M—— and E——, Sir ——'s dressers, and myself, with an experienced "*grab*" —that is to say, a *professional* resurrectionist — were to set off from the Borough about nine o'clock the next evening—which would be the third day after the burial—in a glass coach provided with all "appliances and means to boot." During the day, however, our friend, the grab, suffered so severely from an overnight's excess, as to disappoint us of his invaluable assistance. This unexpected *contretemps* nearly put an end to our project; for the few other grabs we knew, were absent on *professional tours!* Luckily, however, I bethought me of a poor Irish porter—a sort of "ne'er-do-weel" hanger-on at the hospital — whom I had several times hired to go on errands. This man I sent for to my rooms, and, in the presence of my two coadjutors, persuaded, threatened, and bothered into acquiescence, promising him half-a-guinea for his evening's work—and as much whisky as he could drink prudently. As Mr Tip—that was the name he went by—had some personal acquaintance with the sick grab, he succeeded in borrowing his chief tools; with which, in a sack large enough to contain our expected prize, he repaired to my rooms about nine o'clock, while the coach was standing at the door. Our Jehu had received a quiet douceur in addition to the hire of himself and coach. As soon as we had exhibited sundry doses of Irish cordial to our friend Tip—under the effects of which he became quite "bouncible," and *ranted* about the feat he was to take a prominent part in—and equipped ourselves in our worst clothes, and white top-coats, we entered the vehicle—four in number—and drove off. The weather had been exceedingly capricious all the evening—moonlight, rain, thunder, and lightning, fitfully alternating. The only thing we were anxious about was the darkness, to shield us from all possible observation. I must own, that, in ana-

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lysing the feelings that prompted me to undertake and go through with this affair, the mere love of adventure operated quite as powerfully as the wish to benefit the cause of anatomical science. A midnight expedition to the tombs!—It took our fancy amazingly; and then—Sir ——'s cunning hint about the "danger"—and our "spirit!"

The garrulous Tip supplied us with amusement all the way down—rattle, rattle, rattle, incessantly; but as soon as we had arrived at that part of the road where we were to stop, and caught sight of —— church, with its hoary steeple—glistening in the fading moonlight, as though it were standing sentinel over the graves around it, one of which we were going so rudely to violate—Tip's spirits began to falter a little. He said little—and that at intervals. To be very candid with the reader, *none* of us felt over much at our ease. Our expedition began to wear a somewhat hairbrained aspect, and to be environed with formidable contingencies which we had not taken sufficiently into our calculations. What, for instance, if the two stout fellows, the brothers, should be out watching their sister's grave? They were not likely to stand on much ceremony with us. And then the manual difficulties! E—— was the only one of us that had ever assisted at the exhumation of a body—and the rest of us were likely to prove but bungling workmen. However, we had gone too far to think of retreating. We none of us *spoke* our suspicions, but the silence that reigned within the coach was tolerably significant. In contemplation, however, of some such contingency, we had put a bottle of brandy in the coach pocket; and before we drew up, had all four of us drunk pretty deeply of it. At length, the coach turned down a by-lane to the left, which led directly to the churchyard wall; and after moving a few steps down it, in order to shelter our vehicle from the observation of highway passengers, the coach stopped, and the driver opened the door.

"Come, Tip," said I, "out with you."

"Get out, did you say, sir? To be sure I will—Och! to be sure I will." But there was small show of alacrity in his movements as he descended the steps; for, while I was speaking, I was interrupted by the solemn clangour of the church clock announcing the hour of midnight. The sounds seemed to *warn* us against what we were going to do.

"'Tis a cowld night, yer honours," said Tip, in an under tone, as we successively alighted, and stood together, looking up and down the dark lane, to see if anything was stirring but ourselves. "'Tis a cowld night—and—and—and"—he stammered.

"Why, you cowardly old scoundrel," grumbled M——, "are you frightened already? What's the matter, eh? Hoist up the bag on your shoulders directly, and lead the way down the lane."

"Och, but yer honours—och! by the mother that bore me, but 'tis a murtherous cruel thing, I'm thinking, to wake the poor cratur from her last sleep." He said this so querulously, that I began to entertain serious apprehensions, after all, of his defection; so I insisted on his taking a little more brandy, by way of bringing him up to par. It was of no use, however. His reluctance increased every moment—and it even dispirited *us*. I verily believe the turning of a straw would have decided us all on jumping into the coach again, and returning home without accomplishing our errand. Too many of the students, however, were apprised of our expedition, for us to think of terminating it so ridiculously. As it were by mutual consent, we stood and paused a few moments, about halfway down the lane. M—— whistled with infinite spirit and distinctness; E—— remarked to me that he "always thought a churchyard at midnight was the gloomiest object imaginable;" and I talked about *business*—"soon be over"—"shallow grave," &c. &c.

"Confound it—what if those two brothers of hers SHOULD be there?" said M—— abruptly, making a dead stop, and folding his arms on his breast.

"Powerful fellows, both of them!"

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muttered E——. We resumed our march — when Tip, our advanced guard—a title he earned by anticipating our steps about three inches —suddenly stood still, let down the bag from his shoulders, elevated both hands in a listening attitude, and exclaimed, "Whisht!—whisht!—By my soul, *what* was that?" We all paused in silence, looking palely at one another—but could hear nothing except the drowsy flutter of a bat wheeling away from us a little overhead.

"Fait — an' wasn't it somebody *spaking* on the far side o' the hedge, I heard?" whispered Tip.

"Poh — stuff, you idiot!" I exclaimed, losing my temper. "Come, M—— and E——, it's high time we had done with all this cowardly nonsense; and if we mean really to *do* anything, we must make haste. 'Tis past twelve—day breaks about four—and it is coming on wet, you see." Several large drops of rain, pattering heavily among the leaves and branches, corroborated my words, by announcing a coming shower, and the air was sultry enough to warrant the expectation of a thunder-storm. We therefore buttoned up our greatcoats to the chin, and hurried on to the churchyard wall, which ran across the bottom of the lane. This wall we had to climb over to get into the churchyard, and it was not a very high one. Here Tip annoyed us again. I told him to lay down his bag, mount the wall, and look over into the yard, to see whether all was clear before us; and, as far as the light would enable him, to look about for a new-made grave. Very reluctantly he complied, and contrived to scramble to the top of the wall. He had hardly time, however, to peer over into the churchyard, when a fluttering streak of lightning flashed over us, followed, in a second or two, by a loud burst of thunder! Tip fell in an instant to the ground, like a cockchaffer shaken from an elm-tree, and lay crossing himself, and muttering Paternosters. We could scarcely help laughing at the manner in which he tumbled down, simultaneously with the flash of lightning. "Now, look ye, gintlemen," said he, still squatting on the ground, "do you mane to give the poor cratur Christian burial, when ye've done wid her? An' will you put her back again as ye found her? 'Case, if you won't, blood an' oons"——

"Hark ye now, Tip," said I sternly, taking out one of a brace of *empty* pistols I had put into my greatcoat pocket, and presenting it to his head, "we have hired you on this business, for the want of a better, you wretched fellow! and if you give us any more of your nonsense, by —— I'll send a bullet through your brain! Do you hear me, Tip?"

"Och, aisy, aisy wid ye! don't murther me! Bad-luck to me that I ever cam wid ye! Och, and if iver I live to die, won't I see and bury my ould body out o' the rache of all the docthers in the world? If I don't, divel burn me!" We all laughed aloud at Tip's truly Hibernian expostulation.

"Come, sir, mount! over with you!" said we, helping to push him upwards. "Now, drop this bag on the other side," we continued, giving him the sack that contained our implements. We all three of us then followed, and alighted safely in the churchyard. It poured with rain; and, to enhance the dreariness and horrors of the time and place, flashes of lightning followed in quick succession, shedding a transient awful glare over the scene, revealing the white tombstones, the ivy-grown venerable church, and our own figures, a shivering group, come on an unhallowed errand! I perfectly well recollect the lively feelings of apprehension —"the compunctious visitings of remorse" — which the circumstances called forth in my own breast, and which, I had no doubt, were shared by my companions.

As no time, however, was to be lost, I left the group, for an instant, under the wall, to search out the grave. The accurate instructions I had received enabled me to pitch on the spot with little difficulty; and I returned to my companions, who immediately followed me to the scene of operations. We had no umbrellas, and our greatcoats were

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saturated with wet; but the brandy we had recently taken did us good service, by exhilarating our spirits, and especially those of Tip. He untied the sack in a twinkling, and shook out the hoes and spades, &c.; and, taking one of the latter himself, he commenced digging with such energy, that we had hardly prepared ourselves for work, before he had cleared away nearly the whole of the mound. The rain soon abated, and the lightning ceased for a considerable interval, though thunder was heard occasionally grumbling sullenly in the distance, as if expressing anger at our unholy doings—at least I felt it so. The pitchy darkness continued, so that we could scarcely see one another's figures. We worked on in silence, as fast as our spades could be got into the ground; taking it in turns, two by two, as the grave would not admit of more. On—on—on we worked, till we had hollowed out about three feet of earth. Tip then hastily joined together a long iron screw or borer, which he thrust into the ground, for the purpose of ascertaining the depth at which the coffin yet lay from us. To our vexation, we found a distance of three feet remained to be got through. "Sure, and by the soul of St Patrick, but we'll not be done by the morning!" said Tip, as he threw down the instrument and resumed his spade. We were all discouraged. Oh, how earnestly I wished myself at home, in my snug little bed in the Borough! How I cursed the Quixotism that had led me into such an undertaking! I had no time, however, for reflection, as it was my turn to relieve one of the diggers; so into the grave I jumped, and worked away as lustily as before. While I was thus engaged, a sudden noise, close to our ears, so startled me, that I protest I thought I should have dropped down dead in the grave I was robbing. I and my fellow-digger let fall our spades, and all four stood still for a second or two in an ecstasy of fearful apprehension. We could not see more than a few inches around us, but heard the grass trodden by approaching feet! They proved to be those of an ass, that was turned at night into the churchyard, and had gone on eating his way towards us; and, while we were standing in mute expectation of what was to come next, opened on us with an astounding hee-haw! hee-haw! hee-haw! Even after we had discovered the ludicrous nature of the interruption, we were too agitated to laugh. The brute was actually close upon us, and had *given tongue* from under poor Tip's elbow, having approached him from behind, as he stood leaning on his spade. Tip started suddenly backward against the animal's head, and fell down. Away sprang the jackass, as much confounded as Tip, kicking and scampering like a mad creature among the tombstones, and hee-hawing incessantly, as if a hundred devils had got into it for the purpose of discomfiting us. I felt so much fury, and fear lest the noise should lead to our discovery, I could have killed the brute if it had been within my reach, while Tip stammered, in an affrightened whispered—"Och, the baste! Och, the baste! The big black divel of a baste! The murtherous, thundering"—— and a great many epithets of the same sort. We gradually recovered from the agitation which this provoking interruption had occasioned; and Tip, under the promise of two bottles of whisky as soon as we arrived safe at home with our prize, renewed his exertions, and dug with such energy that we soon cleared away the remainder of the superincumbent earth, and stood upon the bare lid of the coffin. The grapplers, with ropes attached to them, were then fixed in the sides and extremities, and we were in the act of raising the coffin, when the sound of a human voice, accompanied with footsteps, fell on our startled ears. We heard both distinctly, and crouched down close over the brink of the grave, awaiting in breathless suspense a corroboration of our fears. After a pause of two or three minutes, however, finding that the sounds were not renewed, we began to breathe freer, persuaded that our ears must have deceived us. Once more we resumed our

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work, succeeded in hoisting up the coffin—not without a slip, however, which nearly precipitated it down again to the bottom, with all four of us upon it—and depositing it on the grave-side. Before proceeding to use our screws, or wrenchers, we once more looked and listened, and listened and looked; but neither seeing nor hearing anything, we set to work, prized off the lid in a twinkling, and a transient glimpse of moonlight disclosed to us the shrouded inmate—all white and damp. I removed the face-cloth, and unpinned the cap, while M—— loosed the sleeves from the wrists. Thus were we engaged, when E——, who had hold of the feet, ready to lift them out, suddenly let them go—gasped—"Oh, my God! there they are!" and placed his hand on my arm. He shook like an aspen leaf. I looked towards the quarter whither his eyes were directed, and, sure enough, saw the figure of a man—if not two—moving stealthily toward us. "Well, we're discovered, that's clear," I whispered as calmly as I could. "We shall be murdered!" groaned E——. "Lend me one of the pistols you have with you," said M—— resolutely; "by ——, I'll have a shot for my life, however!" As for poor Tip, who had heard every syllable of this startling colloquy, and himself seen the approaching figures, he looked at me in silence, the image of blank horror! I could have laughed even then, to see his staring black eyes—his little cocked ruby-tinted nose—his chattering teeth. "Hush—hush!" said I, cocking my pistol, while M—— did the same; for none but myself knew that they were unloaded. To add to our consternation, the malignant moon withdrew the small scantling of light she had been doling out to us, and sank beneath a vast cloud, "black as Erebus," but not before we had caught a glimpse of two more figures moving towards us in an opposite direction. "Surrounded!" two of us muttered in the same breath. We all rose to our feet, and stood together, not knowing what to do—unable in the darkness to see one another distinctly. Presently we heard a voice say, in a subdued tone, "Where are they? where? *Sure* I saw them! Oh, there they are! Halloa—halloa!"

That was enough—the signal of our flight. Without an instant's pause, or uttering another syllable, off we sprung, like small-shot from a gun's mouth, all of us in different directions, we knew not whither. I heard the report of a gun—mercy on me! and pelted away, scarcely knowing what I was about, dodging among the graves—now coming full-butt against a plaguy tombstone, then tumbling on the slippery grass—while some one followed close at my heels panting and puffing, but whether friend or foe, I knew not. At length I stumbled against a large tombstone; and, finding it open at the two ends, crept under it, resolved there to abide the issue. At the moment of my ensconcing myself, the sound of the person's footsteps who had followed me suddenly ceased. I heard a splashing sound, then a kicking and scrambling, a faint stifled cry of "Ugh—oh ugh!" and all was still. Doubtless it must be one of my companions, who had been wounded. What could I do, however? I did not know in what direction he lay—the night was pitch-dark—and if I crept from my hiding-place, for all I knew, I might be shot myself. I shall never forget that hour—no, never! There was I, squatting like a toad on the wet grass and weeds, not daring to do more than breathe! Here was a predicament! I could not conjecture how the affair would terminate. Was I to lie where I was till daylight, that then I might step into the arms of my captors? What was become of my companions?—While turning these thoughts in my mind, and wondering that all was so quiet, my ear caught the sound of the splashing of water, apparently at but a yard or two's distance, mingled with the sounds of a half-smothered human voice—"Ugh! ugh! Och, murther! murther! murther!"—another splash—"and isn't it dead, and drowned, and kilt I am"——

Whew! *Tip* in trouble, thought I, not daring to speak. Yes—it was

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poor Tip, I afterwards found—who had followed at my heels, scampering after me as fast as fright could drive him, till his career was unexpectedly ended by his tumbling—souse—head over heels, into a newly-opened grave in his path, with more than a foot of water in it. There the poor fellow remained, after recovering from the first shock of his fall, not daring to utter a word for some time, lest he should be discovered—straddling over the water with his toes and elbows stuck into the loose soil on each side, to support him. This was his interesting position, as he subsequently informed me, at the time of uttering the sounds which first attracted my attention. Though not aware of his situation at the time, I was almost choked with laughter as he went on with his soliloquy, somewhat in this strain:—

"Och, Tip, ye ould divel! Don't it sarve ye right, ye fool? Ye villanous ould coffin-robber! Won't ye burn for this hereafter, ye sinner? Ulaloo! When ye are dead yourself, may ye be trated like that poor cratur—and yourself alive to see it! Och, hubbaboo! hubbaboo! Isn't it sure that I'll be drowned, an' then it's kilt I'll be!"—A loud splash, and a pause for a few moments, as if he were re-adjusting his footing—"Och! an' I'm catching my dith of cowld! Fait, an' it's a divel a drop o' the two bottles o' whisky I'll ever see—Och, och, och!"—another splash—"och, an' isn't this uncomfortable! Murther and oons!—if ever I come out of this—sha'n't I be dead before I do?"

"Tip—Tip—Tip!" I whispered in a low tone. There was a dead silence. "Tip, Tip, where are you? What's the matter, eh?"—No answer; but he muttered in a low tone to himself—"*Where am I!* by my soul! Isn't it dead, and kilt, and drowned, and murthered I am—that's all!"

"Tip—Tip—Tip!" I repeated, a little louder.

"Tip, indeed! Fait, ye may call, bad-luck to ye—whoever ye are—but it's divel a word I'll be after spaking to ye."

"Tip, you simpleton! It's I—Mr ——."

In an instant there was a sound of jumping and splashing, as if surprise had made him slip from his standing again, and he called out, "Whoo! whoo! an' is't you, sweet Mr ——! What is the matter wid ye? Are ye kilt? Where are they all? Have they taken ye away, every mother's son of you?" he asked eagerly, in a breath.

"Why, what are *you* doing, Tip? Where are *you?*"

"Fait, an' it's being *washed* I am, in the feet, and in the queerest *tub* your honour ever saw!" A noise of scuffling, not many yards off, silenced us both in an instant. Presently I distinguished the voice of E——, calling out—"Help, M——!" (my name)—"Where are you?" The noise increased, and seemed nearer than before. I crept from my lurking place, and aided at Tip's resurrection, when both of us hurried towards the spot whence the sound came. By the faint moonlight, I could just see the outlines of two figures violently struggling and grappling together. Before I could come up to them, both fell down, locked in each other's arms, rolling over each other, grasping one another's collars, gasping and panting as if in mortal struggle. The moon suddenly emerged, and who do you think, reader, was E——'s antagonist? Why, the person whose appearance had so discomfited and affrighted us all—OUR COACHMAN. That worthy individual, alarmed at our protracted stay, had, contrary to our injunctions, left his coach to come and search after us. He it was whom we had seen stealing towards us; his steps—his voice had alarmed us, for he could not see us distinctly enough to discover whether we were his fare or not. He was on the point of whispering my name, it seems—when we must all have understood one another—when lo! we all started off in the manner which has been described; and he himself, not knowing that he was the reason of it, had taken to his heels, and fled for his life! He supposed we had fallen into

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a sort of ambuscade. He happened to hide himself behind the tombstone next but one to that which sheltered E——. Finding all quiet, he and E——, as if by mutual consent, were groping from their hiding-places, when they unexpectedly fell foul of one another—each too affrighted to speak—and hence the scuffle.

After this satisfactory denouement, we all repaired to the grave's mouth, and found the corpse and coffin precisely as we had left them. We were not many moments in taking out the body, stripping it, and thrusting it into the sack we had brought. We then tied the top of the sack, carefully deposited the shroud, &c., in the coffin, re-screwed down the lid—fearful, impious mockery! — and consigned it once more to its resting-place, Tip scattering a handful of earth on the lid, and exclaiming reverently—"An' may the Lord forgive us for what we have done to ye!" The coachman and I then took the body between us to the coach, leaving M——, and E——, and Tip, to fill up the grave.

Our troubles were not yet ended, however. Truly it seemed as though Providence were throwing every obstacle in our way. Nothing went right. On reaching the spot where we had left the coach, behold it lay several yards farther in the lane, tilted into the ditch—for the horses, being hungry, and left to themselves, in their anxiety to graze on the verdant bank of the hedge, had contrived to overturn the vehicle in the ditch—and one of the horses was kicking vigorously when we came up—the whole body off the ground—and resting on that of his companion. We had considerable difficulty in righting the coach, as the horses were inclined to be obstreperous. We succeeded, however—deposited our unholy spoil within, turned the horses' heads towards the high-road, and then, after enjoining Jehu to keep his place on the box, I went to see how my companions were getting on. They had nearly completed their task, and told me that "shovelling *in* was surprisingly easier than shovelling *out!*" We took great pains to leave everything as neat, and as nearly resembling what we found it, as possible, in order that our visit might not be suspected. We then carried away each our own tools, and hurried as fast as possible to our coach, for the dim twilight had already stolen a march upon us, devoutly thankful that, after so many interruptions, we had succeeded in effecting our object.

It was broad daylight before we reached town, and a wretched coach company we looked, all wearied and dirty—Tip especially, who nevertheless snored in the corner as comfortably as if he had been warm in his bed. I heartily resolved with him, on leaving the coach, that it should be "the devil's own dear self only that should timpt me out agin *body-snatching!*" *

* On examining the body, we found that Sir ——'s suspicions were fully verified. It was disease of the heart, but of too complicated a nature to be made intelligible to general readers. I never heard that the girl's friends discovered our doings; and, for all they know, she is now mouldering away in —— churchyard; whereas, in point of fact, her bleached skeleton adorns ——'s surgery; and a preparation of her *heart* enriches ——'s museum!

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# CHAPTER XVII.

## THE SPECTRE-SMITTEN.

Few topics of medical literature have occasioned more wide and contradictory speculation than that of insanity, with reference, as well to its predisposing and immediate causes, as its best method of treatment. Since experience is the only substratum of real knowledge, the easiest and surest way of arriving at those general principles which may regulate both our pathological and therapeutical researches, especially concerning the subtle, almost inscrutable disorder, *mania*, is, when one does meet with some striking, well marked case, to watch it closely throughout, and be particularly anxious to seize on all those smaller features—those more transient indications, which are truer characteristics of the complaint than perhaps any other. With this object, did I pay close attention to the very singular and affecting case detailed in the following narrative. I have not given the *whole* of my observations, far from it; those only are recorded which seemed to me to have some claims to the consideration of both medical and general readers. The apparent eccentricity of the title will be found accounted for in the course of the narrative.

Mr M——, as one of a very large party, had been enjoying the splendid hospitality of Lady ——, and did not leave till a late, or rather early hour, in the morning. Pretty women, music, and champagne, had almost turned his head; and it was rather fortunate for him that a hackney-coach stand was within a stone's throw of the house he was leaving. Muffling his cloak closely around him, he contrived to move towards it in a tolerably direct line, and a few moments' time beheld him driving, at the usual snail's pace of those rickety vehicles, to Lincoln's Inn; for Mr M—— was a law student. In spite of the transient exhilaration produced by the scenes he had just quitted, and the excitement consequent on the prominent share he took in an animated, though accidental discussion, in the presence of about thirty of the most elegant women that could well be brought together, he found himself becoming the subject of a most unaccountable depression of spirits. Even while at Lady ——'s, he had latterly perceived himself talking often for mere talking's sake, the chain of his thoughts perpetually broken, and an impatience and irritability of manner towards those whom he addressed, which he readily resolved, however, into the reaction following high excitement. M——, I ought before, perhaps, to have mentioned, was a man of great talent, chiefly, however, imaginative; and had that evening been particularly brilliant on his favourite topic, *diablerie* and mysticism; towards which he generally contrived to incline every conversation in which he bore a part. He had been dilating, in particular, on the power possessed by Mr Maturin of exciting the most fearful and horrific ideas in the minds of his readers, instancing a particular passage of one of his romances, the title of which I have forgotten, where the fiend suddenly presents himself to his appalled victim, amidst the silence and gloom of his prison-cell. Long before he had reached home, the fumes of wine had evaporated, and the influence of excitement subsided; and, with reference to intoxication, he was as sober and calm as ever he was in his life. *Why* he

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knew not, but his heart seemed to grow heavier and heavier, and his thoughts gloomier, every step by which he neared Lincoln's Inn. It struck three o'clock as he entered the sombrous portals of the ancient inn of court. The perfect silence—the moonlight shining sadly on the dusky buildings—the cold quivering stars, all these together, combined to enhance his nervousness. He described it to me as though things seemed to wear a strange, spectral, supernatural aspect. Not a watchman of the inn was heard crying the hour, not a porter moving, no living being but himself visible in the large square he was crossing. As he neared his staircase, he perceived his heart fluttering; in short, he felt under some strange unaccountable influence, which, had he reflected a little, he would have discovered to arise merely from an excitable nervous temperament, operating on an imagination peculiarly attuned to sympathies with terror. His chambers lay on the third floor of the staircase; and, on reaching it, he found his door-lamp glimmering with its last expiring ray. He opened his door, and after groping some time in the dark of his sitting-room, found his chamber candlestick. In attempting to light his candle, he put out the lamp. He went down stairs, but found that the lamp of every landing had shared the fate of his own; so he returned, rather irritated, thinking to amerce the porter of his customary Christmas-box, for his niggard supply of oil. After some time spent in the search, he discovered his tinder-box, and proceeded to strike a light. This was not the work of a moment. And where is the bachelor to whom it is? The potent spark, however, dropped at last into the very centre of the soft tinder. M—— blew — it caught — spread; the match quickly kindled, and he lighted his candle. He took it in his hand, and was making for bed, when his eyes caught a glimpse of an object which brought him senseless to the floor. The furniture of his room was disposed as when he had left it; for his laundress had neglected to come and put things in order: the table with a few books on it was drawn towards the fire-place, and by its side stood the ample-cushioned easy-chair. The first object visible, with sudden distinctness, was a figure sitting in the arm-chair. It was that of a gentleman dressed in dark-coloured clothes, his hands, white as alabaster, closed together over his lap, and the face looking away; but it turned slowly towards M——, revealing to him a countenance of a ghastly hue—the features glowing like steel heated to a white heat, and the two eyes turned full towards him, and blazing—absolutely blazing, he described it—with a most horrible lustre. The appalling spectre, while M——'s eyes were riveted upon it, though glazing fast with fright, slowly rose from its seat, stretched out both its arms, and seemed approaching him, when he fell down senseless on the floor, as if smitten with apoplexy. He recollected nothing more, till he found himself, about the middle of the next day, in bed, his laundress, myself and apothecary, and several others, standing round him. His situation was not discovered till more than an hour after he had fallen, as nearly as could be subsequently ascertained, nor would it then but for a truly fortunate accident. He had neglected to close either of his outer-doors (I believe it is usual for chambers in the inns of court to have double outer-doors), and an old woman, who happened to be leaving the adjoining set about five o'clock, on seeing Mr M——'s doors both open at such an untimely hour, was induced, by feelings of curiosity and alarm, to return to the rooms she had left for a light, with which she entered his chambers, after having repeatedly called his name without receiving any answer. What will it be supposed had been her occupation at such an early hour in the adjoining chambers?—Laying out the corpse of their occupant, a Mr T——, who had expired about eight o'clock the preceding evening!

Mr M—— had known him, though not very intimately: and there were some painful circumstances attending his death, which, even though on no other grounds than mere sympathy, M—— had laid much to heart. In ad-

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dition to this, he had been observed by his friends as being latterly the subject of very high excitement, owing to the successful prosecution of an affair of great interest and importance.* We all accounted for his present situation by referring it to some apoplectic seizure; for we were, of course, ignorant of the real occasion, fright, which I did not learn till long afterwards. The laundress told me that she found Mr M——, to her great terror, stretched motionless along the floor, in his cloak and full dress, and with a candlestick lying beside him. She, at first, supposed him intoxicated; but, on finding all her efforts to rouse him unsuccessful, and seeing his fixed features and rigid frame, she hastily summoned to her assistance a fellow-laundress, whom she had left in charge of the corpse next door, undressed him, and laid him on the bed. A neighbouring medical man was then called in, who pronounced it to be a case of epilepsy; and he was sufficiently warranted by the appearance of a little froth about the lips, prolonged stupor, resembling sleep, and frequent convulsions of the most violent kind. The remedies resorted to produced no alleviation of the symptoms; and matters continued to wear such a threatening and alarming aspect, that I was summoned in by his brother, and was at his bedside by two o'clock. His countenance was dark, and highly intellectual: its lineaments were, naturally, full of power and energy; but *now*, overclouded with an expression of trouble and horror. He was seized with a dreadful fit soon after I had entered the room. Oh! it is a piteous and shocking spectacle to see the human frame subjected to such demoniacal twitchings and contortions, which are so sudden, so irresistible, as to suggest the idea of some vague, terrible, exciting cause, which cannot be discovered: as though the sufferer lay passive in the grasp of some messenger of darkness "*sent to buffet him.*"†

M—— was a very powerful man; and, during the fits, it was next to impossible for all present, united, to control his movements. The foam at his mouth suggested to his terrified brother the harrowing suspicion that the case was one of hydrophobia. None of my remonstrances or assurances to the contrary sufficed to quiet him, and his distress added to the confusion of the scene. After prescribing to the best of my ability, I left, considering the case to be one of simple epilepsy. During the rest of the day and night the fits abated both in violence and frequency; but he was left in a state of the utmost exhaustion, from which, however, he seemed to be rapidly recovering during the space of the four succeeding days; when I was suddenly summoned to his bedside, which I had left only two hours before, with the intelligence that he had disclosed symptoms of more alarming illness than ever. I hurried to his chambers, and found that the danger had not been magnified. One of his friends met me on the staircase, and told me that, about half an hour before, while

* An extensive literary undertaking.

† The popular etymology of the word *epilepsy*, sanctioned by several reputable class-books of the profession, which are now lying before mo—*i. e.* ἐπίλΕΙψις is erroneous, and more—nonsensical. For the information of *general* readers, I may state, that its true derivation is from λαμβάνω, through its Ionic obsolete form, λήβω, whence ἐπίλΗψις—a seizing, a holding fast. Therefore we speak of an ATTACK of epilepsy. This etymology is highly descriptive of the disease in question; for the sudden prostration, rigidity, contortions, &c., of the patient, strongly suggest the idea that he has been *taken* or *seized* (ἐπιλησθεὶς) by, as it were, some external invisible agent. It is worthy of notice, by the way, that ἐπιληπτικὸς is used by ecclesiastical writers to denote a person *possessed by a demon.*—Ἔπίλειψις, signifies simply "failure, deficiency." I shall conclude this note with a practical illustration of the necessity which calls it forth—the correction of a prevalent error. A flippant student, who, I was given to understand, plumed himself much among his companions on his Greek, was suddenly asked by one of his examiners for a definition of *epilepsy*, grounded on its etymology. I forget the definition, which was given with infinite self-sufficiency of tone and manner; but the fine touch of scholarship with which it was finished off, I well recollect:—"From ἐπίλειψις—(ἐπί-λειπω—I fail, am wanting); therefore, sir, epilepsy is a *failure of animal functions!*"—The same sage definition is regularly given by a well-known metropolitan lecturer.

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he and Mr C—— M——, the patient's brother, were sitting beside him, he suddenly turned to the latter, and inquired, in a tone full of apprehension and terror, "Is Mr T—— dead?"

"Oh, dear! yes; he died several days ago," was the reply.

"Then it was he," he gasped, "it was HE whom I saw, and he is surely *damned!* Yes, merciful Maker! he is, he is!" he continued, elevating his voice to a perfect roar; "and the flames have reduced his face to ashes! Horror! horror! horror!" He then shut his eyes, and relapsed into silence for about ten minutes, when he exclaimed, "Hark you, there—secure me! tie me! make me fast, or I shall burst upon you and destroy you all, for I am going mad—I feel it!" He ceased, and commenced breathing fast and heavily, his chest heaving as if under the pressure of enormous weight, and his swelling, quivering features evidencing the dreadful uproar within. Presently he began to grind his teeth, and his expanding eyes glared about him in all directions, as though following the motions of some frightful object, and he muttered fiercely through his closed teeth, "Oh! save me from him—save me—save me!"

It was a fearful thing to see him lying in such a state, grinding his teeth as if he would crush them to powder—his livid lips crested with foam—his features swollen, writhing, blackening; and, which gave his face a peculiarly horrible and fiendish expression, his eyes distorted, or inverted upwards, so that nothing but the glaring whites of them could be seen—his whole frame rigid—and his hands clenched, as though they would never open again! It is a dreadful tax on one's nerves to have to encounter such objects, familiar though medical men are with such and similar spectacles; and, in the present instance, every one round the bedside of the unfortunate patient, stood trembling with pale and momentarily averted faces. The ghastly, fixed, upturning of the eyes in epileptic patients, fills me with horror whenever I recall their image to my mind!

The return of these epileptic fits, in such violence, and after such an interval, alarmed me with apprehensions, lest, as is not unfrequently the case, apoplexy should supervene, or even ultimate insanity. It was rather singular that M—— was never known to have had an epileptic fit previous to the present seizure, and he was then in his twenty-fifth year. I was conjecturing what sudden fright or blow, or accident of any kind, or congestion of the vessels of the brain from frequent inebriation, could have brought on the present fit, when my patient, whose features had gradually sunk again into their natural disposition, gave a sigh of exhaustion—the perspiration burst forth, and he murmured—some time before we could distinctly catch the words—"Oh! spectre-smitten! spectre-smitten!"—(which expression I have adopted as the title of this paper)—"I shall never recover again!" Though sufficiently surprised, and perplexed about the import of the words, we took no notice of them; but endeavoured to divert his thoughts from the fantasy, if such there were, which seemed to possess them, by inquiring into the nature of his symptoms. He disregarded us, however; feebly grasped my hand in his clammy fingers, and, looking at me languidly, muttered—"What—oh, what brought the *fiend* into *my* chambers?"—and I felt his whole frame pervaded by a cold shiver—"Poor T——! Horrid fate!" On hearing him mention T——'s name, we all looked simultaneously at one another, but without speaking; for a suspicion crossed our minds that his highly wrought feelings, acting on a strong imagination, always tainted with superstitious terrors, had conjured up some hideous object, which had scared him nearly to madness—probably some fancied apparition of his deceased neighbour. He began again to utter long deep-drawn groans, that gradually gave place to the heavy stertorous breathing, which, with other symptoms—his pulse, for instance, beating about 115 a-minute—confirmed me in the opinion that he was suffering from

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a very severe congestion of the vessels of the brain. I directed copious venesection*—his head to be shaven, and covered perpetually with cloths soaked in evaporating lotions—blisters behind his ears and at the nape of the neck—and appropriate internal medicines. I then left him, apprehending the worst consequences: for I had once before a similar case under my care—one in which a young lady was, which I strongly suspected to be the case with M——, absolutely frightened to death, and went through nearly the same round of symptoms as those which were beginning to make their appearance in my present patient—a sudden epileptic seizure, terminating in outrageous madness, which destroyed both the physical and intellectual energies; and the young lady expired. I may possibly hereafter prepare for publication some of my notes of *her* case, which had some very remarkable features.†

The next morning, about eleven, saw me again at Mr M——'s chambers, where I found three or four members of his family—two of them his married sisters—seated round his sitting-room fire, in melancholy silence. Mr ——, the apothecary, had just left, but was expected to return every moment to meet me in consultation. My patient lay alone in his bedroom asleep, and apparently better than he had been since his first seizure. He had experienced only one slight fit during the night; and though he had been a little delirious in the earlier part of the evening, he had been, on the whole, so calm and quiet, that his friends' apprehensions of insanity were beginning to subside; so he was left, as I said, *alone;* for the nurse, just before my arrival, had left her seat by his bedside for a few moments, thinking him "in a comfortable and easy nap," and was engaged, in a low whisper, conversing with the members of M——'s family,

* For using this word, and one above, "stertorous," a weekly work accuses the writer of PEDANTRY!

† Through want of time and room, I am compelled to condense my memoranda of the case alluded to into a note. The circumstances occurred in the year 1813. The Hon. Miss —— was a young woman about eighteen or twenty years of age; and being of a highly fanciful turn, betook herself to congenial literature, in the shape of novels and romances, especially those which dealt with "unearthlies." They pushed out of her head all ideas of *real* life; for morning, noon, and night, beheld her bent over the pages of some absorbing tale or other, to the exclusion of all other kinds of reading. The natural consequence of all this was, that she became one of the most fanciful and timorous creatures breathing. She had worked herself up to such a morbid pitch of sensitiveness and apprehension, that she dared hardly be alone even during the day; and as for night-time, she had a couple of candles always burning in her bedroom, and her maid sleeping with her on a side-bed.

One night, about twelve o'clock, Miss —— and her maid retired to bed, the former absorbed and lost in the scenes of a petrifying romance she had finished reading only an hour before. Her maid had occasion to go down stairs again for the purpose of fetching up some curling-papers; and she had scarcely reached the lower landing on her return, before she heard a faint scream proceed from her young mistress's chamber. On hurrying back, the servant beheld Miss —— stretched senseless on the floor, with both hands pressed upon her eyes. She instantly roused the whole the family; but their efforts were unavailing. Miss —— was in a fit of epilepsy, and medical assistance was called in. I was one of the first that was summoned. For two days she lay in a state closely resembling that of Mr M—— in the text; but in about a week's time she recovered consciousness, and was able to converse calmly and connectedly. She told me that she had been *frightened* into the fit: that a few moments after the maid had left her, on the night alluded to, she sat down before her dressing-glass, which had two candles, in branches from each side of it. She was hardly seated, before a "strange sensation seized her," to use her own words. She felt cold and nervous. The bedroom was both spacious and gloomy, and she did not relish the idea of being left alone in it. She rose and went towards the bed for her nightcap; and on pushing aside the heavy damask curtains, she heard a rustling noise on the opposite side of the bed, as if some one had hastily leaped off. She trembled, and her heart beat hard. She resumed her seat, however, with returning self-possession, on hearing the approaching footsteps of her maid. On suddenly directing her eyes towards the glass, they met the dim outline of a figure standing close behind her with frightful features, and a pendant plume of a faint fiery hue! The rest has been told. Her mind, however, long weakened, and her physical energies disordered, had received too severe a shock to recover from it quickly. A day or two after Miss —— had told me the above, she suffered a sudden and most unexpected relapse. Oh, that merciless and



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who were in the sitting-room. Hearing such a report of my patient, I sat down quietly among his relatives, determining not to disturb him, at least till the arrival of the apothecary. Thus were we engaged, questioning the nurse in an under tone, when a loud laugh from the bedroom suddenly silenced our whisperings, and turned us all pale. We started to our feet with blank amazement in each countenance, scarcely crediting the evidence of our senses. Could it be M——? It *must*, there was none else in the room. What, then, was he laughing about?

While we were standing silently gazing on one another, with much agitation, the laugh was repeated, but longer and louder than before, accompanied with the sound of footsteps, now crossing the room—then, as if of one jumping! The ladies turned paler than before, and seemed scarcely able to stand. They sank again into their chairs, gasping with terror. "Go in, nurse, and see what's the matter," said I, standing by the side of the younger of the ladies, whom I expected every instant to fall into my arms in a swoon.

"Doctor!—go in?—I—I—I dare not!" stammered the nurse, pale as ashes, and trembling violently.

"Do you come *here*, then, and attend to Mrs ——," said I, "and I will go in." The nurse staggered to my place, in a state not far removed from that of the lady whom she was called to attend; for a third laugh—long, loud, uproarious—had burst from the room while I was speaking. After cautioning the ladies and the nurse to observe profound silence, and not to attempt following me till I sent for them, I stepped noiselessly to the bedroom door, and opened it slowly and softly not to alarm him. All was silent within; but the first object that presented itself, when I saw fairly into the room, can never be effaced from my mind to the day of my death. Mr M—— had got out of bed,* pulled off his shirt, and stepped to the dressing-table, where he stood stark naked before the glass, with a razor in his right hand, with which he had just finished shaving off his eyebrows; and he was eyeing himself steadfastly in the glass, holding the razor elevated above his head. On seeing the door open, and my face peering at him, he turned full towards me, (the grotesque aspect of his countenance, denuded of so prominent a feature as the eye-

fiendish EPILEPSY!—how it tossed about those tender limbs!—how it distorted and convulsed those fair and handsome features! To see the mild eye of beauty subjected to the horrible upturned glare described above, and the slender fingers black and clenched—the froth bubbling on the lips—the grinding of the teeth!—would it not shock and wring the heart of the beholder? It did *mine*, accustomed as I am to such spectacles.

Insanity at length made its appearance, and locked its hapless victim in its embraces for nearly a year. She was removed to a private asylum, and for *six weeks* was chained by a staple to the wall of her bedroom, in addition to enduring a strait waistcoat. On one occasion I saw her in one of her most frantic moods. She *cursed* and *swore* in the most diabolical manner, and yelled, and laughed, and chattered her teeth, and spit! The beautiful hair had been shaved off, and was then scarce half an inch long, so that she hardly looked like a female about the head. The eyes, too, were surrounded by dark *areolæ*, and her mouth disfigured by her swollen tongue and lips, which she had severely bitten. She motioned me to draw near her, when she had become a little more tranquil, and I thoughtlessly acceded. When I was within a foot of her, she made a sudden and desperate plunge towards me, motioning with her lips as though she would have torn me, like a tigress its prey! I thank God that her hands were handcuffed behind her, or I must have suffered severely. She once bit off the little finger of one of the nurses who was feeding her!

* * * * *

When she was sufficiently recovered to be removed from —— House, she was taken to the south of France by my directions. She was in a very shattered state of health, and survived her removal no more than three months.

Who can deny that this poor girl fell a victim to the pestilent effects of romance reading?

* Since this was published, I have been favoured by Sir Henry Halford with the sight of a narrative of a case remarkably similar to the present one, but told, I need hardly say, with far more graphic ability. I hope—nay. I believe—it will shortly be published by the learned and accomplished baronet. (It has—in the "Essays and Orations read and delivered at the Royal College of Physicians," &c. &c., since published.—Note to the Third Edition.)

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brows, and his head completely shaved, and the wildfire of madness flashing from his staring eyes, exciting the most frightful ideas,) brandishing the razor over his head with an air of triumph, and shouting nearly at the top of his voice—"Ah, ha, ha!—What do you think of this?"

Merciful Heaven! may I never be placed again in such perilous circumstances, nor have my mind overwhelmed with such a gush of horror as burst over it at that moment! What was I to do? Obeying a sudden impulse, I had entered the room, shutting the door after me; and, should any one in the sitting-room suddenly attempt to open it again, or make a noise or disturbance of any kind, by giving vent to their emotions, what was to become of the madman or ourselves? He might, in an instant, almost sever his head from his shoulders, or burst upon me or his sisters, and do us some deadly mischief! I felt conscious that the lives of all of us depended on my conduct; and I devoutly thank God for the measure of tolerable self-possession which was vouchsafed to me at that dreadful moment. I continued standing like a statue, motionless and silent, endeavouring to fix my eye on him, that I might gain the command of *his; that* successful, I had some hopes of being able to deal with him. He, in turn, now stood speechless, and I thought he was quailing—that I had overmastered him—when I was suddenly fit to faint with despair, for at that awful instant I heard the door-handle tried—the door pushed gently open—and saw the nurse, I supposed, or one of the ladies peeping through it. The maniac also heard it—the spell was broken—and, in a frenzy, he leaped several times successively in the air, brandishing the razor over his head as before.

While he was in the midst of these feats, I turned my head hurriedly to the person who had so cruelly disobeyed my orders, thereby endangering my life, and whispered in low affrighted accents: "At the peril of your lives—of mine—shut the door—away, away—hush! or we are all murdered!" I was obeyed—the intruder withdrew, and I heard a sound as if she had fallen to the floor, probably in a swoon. Fortunately the madman was so occupied with his antics, that he did not observe what had passed at the door. It was the nurse who made the attempt to discover what was going on, I afterwards learned—but unsuccessfully, for she had seen nothing. My injunctions were obeyed to the letter, for they maintained a profound silence, unbroken but by a faint sighing sound, which I should not have heard, but that my ears were painfully sensitive to the slightest noise. To return, however, to myself, and my fearful chamber companion.

"Mighty talisman!" he exclaimed, holding the razor before him, and gazing earnestly at it, "how utterly unworthy—how infamous the common use men put thee to!" Still he continued standing with his eyes fixed intently upon the dead weapon—I all the while uttering not a sound, nor moving a muscle, but waiting for our eyes to meet once more.

"Ha! Doctor ——! how easily I keep you at bay, though little my weapon—*thus*," he gaily exclaimed, at the same time assuming one of the postures of the broadsword exercise; but I observed that he *cautiously avoided meeting my eye again*. I crossed my arms submissively on my breast, and continued in perfect silence, endeavouring, but in vain, to catch a glance of his eye. I did not wish to excite any emotion in him, except such as might have a tendency to calm, pacify, disarm him. Seeing me stand thus, and manifesting no disposition to meddle with him, he raised his left hand to his face, and rubbed his fingers rapidly over the site of his shaved eyebrows. He seemed, I thought, inclined to go over them a second time, when a knock was heard at the outer chamber door, which I instantly recognised as that of Mr ——, the apothecary. The madman also heard it, and turned suddenly pale, and moved away from the glass opposite which he had been stooping. "Oh—oh!" he groaned, while

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his features assumed an air of the blankest affright, every muscle quivering, and every limb trembling from head to foot—"Is that—is—is that T—— come for ME?" He let fall the razor on the floor, and clasping his hands in an agony of apprehension, he retreated, crouching and cowering down towards the more distant part of the room, where he continued peering round the bed-post, his eyes straining, as though they would start from their sockets, and fixed steadfastly upon the door. I heard him rustling the bed-curtain and shaking it; but very gently, as if wishing to cover and conceal himself within its folds.

O humanity!—Was *that* poor being—that pitiable maniac—was that the once gay, gifted, brilliant M——?

To return. My attention was wholly occupied with one object, the razor on the floor. How I thanked God for the gleam of hope that all might yet be right—that I might succeed in obtaining possession of the deadly weapon, and putting it beyond his reach! But how was I to do all this? I stole gradually towards the spot where the razor lay, without removing once my eye from his, nor he his from the dreaded door, intending, as soon as I should have come pretty near it, to make a sudden snatch at the horrid implement of destruction. I did—I succeeded—I got it into my possession, scarcely crediting my senses. I had hardly grasped my prize when the door opened, and Mr ——, the apothecary, entered, sufficiently startled and bewildered, as it may be supposed, with the strange aspect of things.

"Ha—ha—ha! It's *you*, is it—it's you—you anatomy!—you plaster! How dare you mock me in this horrid way, eh?" shouted the maniac; and, springing like a lion from his lair, he made for the spot where the confounded apothecary stood, stupefied with terror. I verily believe he would have been destroyed, torn to pieces, or cruelly maltreated in some way or other, had I not started and thrown myself between the maniac and the unwitting object of his vengeance, exclaiming at the same time, as a *dernier resort*, a sudden and strong appeal to his fears—"Remember!—T——! T——! T——!"

"I do—I do!" stammered the maniac, stepping back perfectly aghast. He seemed utterly petrified, and sank shivering down again into his former position at the corner of the bed, moaning—"Oh me! wretched me! Away—away—away!" I then stepped to Mr ——, who had not moved an inch, directed him to retire instantly, conduct all the females out of the chambers, and return as soon as possible with two or three of the inn-porters, or any other able-bodied men he could procure on the spur of the moment; and I concluded by slipping the razor, unobservedly as I thought, into his hands, and bidding him remove it to a place of safety. He obeyed, and I found myself once more alone with the madman.

"M——! dear Mr M——! I've got something to say to you—I have indeed; it's very, very particular." I commenced approaching him slowly, and speaking the softest tones conceivable.

"But you've forgotten THIS, you fool, you!—you have!" he replied fiercely, approaching the dressing-table, and suddenly seizing *another razor*—the fellow of the one I had got hold of with such pains and peril—and which, alas, alas! had never once caught my eye! I gave myself up for lost, fully expecting that I should be murdered, when I saw the bloodthirsty spirit with which he clutched it, brandished it over his head, and with a smile of fiendish derision, shook it full before me! I trembled, however, the next moment, for himself; for he drew it rapidly to and fro before his throat, as though he would give the fatal gash, but he did not touch the skin. He gnashed his teeth with a kind of savage satisfaction at the dreadful power with which he was consciously armed.

"Oh, Mr M——! think of your poor mother and sisters!" I exclaimed in a sorrowful tone, my voice faltering with uncontrollable agitation. He shook the razor again before me with an air of defiance, and really "grinned horribly a ghastly smile."

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"Now, suppose I choose to punish your perfidy, you wretch! and do what you dread, eh?" said he, holding the razor as if he were going to cut his throat.

"Why, wouldn't it be nobler to forgive and forget, Mr M——?" I replied with tolerable firmness, and folding my arms on my breast, anxious to appear quite at ease.

"Too—too—too, doctor!—Too—too—too—too! Ha! by the way—what do you say to a *razor hornpipe*—eh?—Ha, ha, ha! a novelty at least!" He began forthwith to dance a few steps, leaping frantically high, and uttering at intervals a sudden, shrill dissonant cry, resembling that used by those who dance the Highland "fling" or some other species of Scottish dance. I affected to admire his dancing, even to ecstasy, clapping my hands and shouting, "Bravo, bravo! Encore!" He seemed inclined to go over it again, but was too much exhausted, and sat down panting on the window-seat, which was close behind him.

"You'll catch cold, Mr M——, sitting in that draught of air, naked and perspiring as you are. Will you put on your clothes?" said I, approaching him.

"No!" he replied sternly, and extended the razor threateningly. I fell back of course, not knowing what to do, nor choosing to risk either his destruction or my own by attempting any active interference; for what was to be done with a madman who had an open razor in his hand? Mr ——, the apothecary, seemed to have been gone an age; and I found even my *temper* beginning to fail me, for I was tired with his tricks, deadly dangerous as they were. My attention, however, was soon riveted again on the motions of the maniac. "Yes—yes, decidedly so—I'm too hot to do it now—I am!" said he, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, and eyeing the razor intently. I must get calm and cool—and then—*then* for the sacrifice! Aha—the sacrifice! An offering—expiation—even as Abraham—ha, ha, ha! But, by the way, how did Abraham do it—that is, how did he intend to have done it? Ah, I must ask my familiar."

"A *sacrifice*, Mr M——? Why, what do you mean?" I inquired, attempting a laugh—I say, *attempting*—for my blood trickled chillily through my veins, and my heart seemed frozen.

"What do I mean, eh? Wretch! Dolt! What do I mean? Why, a peace-offering to my Maker, for a badly-spent life, to be sure! One would think you had never *heard* of such a thing as religion, you savage!"

"I deny that the sacrifice would be accepted; and for two reasons," I replied, suddenly recollecting that he plumed himself on his casuistry, and hoping to engage him on some new crotchet, which might keep him in play till Mr—— returned with assistance; but I was mistaken!

"Well, well, Doctor ——! let *that* be for the present—I can't resolve doubts now—no, no," he replied solemnly—"'tis a time for action—for action—for action," he continued, gradually elevating his voice, using vehement gesticulations, and rising from his seat.

"Yes, yes," said I warmly; "but though you've followed closely enough the advice of the Talmudist, in shaving off your eyebrows, as a preparatory"——

"Aha! aha!—What!—have *you* seen the Talmud!—Have you really?—Well," he added, after a doubtful pause, "in what do you think I've failed, eh?"

I need hardly say, that I myself scarcely knew what led me to utter the nonsense in question; but I have several times found, in cases of insanity, that suddenly and readily *supplying a motive for the patient's conduct*—referring it to a *cause*, of some sort or other, with steadfast intrepidity—even be the said cause never so preposterously absurd—has been attended with the happiest effects, in arresting the patient's attention—chiming in with his eccentric fancies, and *piquing* his disturbed faculties into *acquiescence* in what he sees coolly taken for granted as quite true—a thing of course—mere matter of fact—by the person he is addressing. I have several times recommended this little device to those who have been intrusted with the care

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of the insane, and have been assured of its success.

"You are very near the mark, I own; but it strikes me that you have shaved them off too equally, too uniformly. You ought to have left some little ridges—furrows—hem, hem!—to—to—terminate, or resemble the—the *striped stick* which Jacob held up before the ewes!"

"Oh—ay—ay! Exactly—true! Strange oversight!" he replied, as if struck with the truth of the remark, and yet puzzled by vain attempts to corroborate it by his own recollections; "I—I recollect it now—but it isn't too late yet—is it?"

"I think not," I replied, with apparent hesitation, hardly crediting the success of my strange stratagem. "To be sure, it will require very great delicacy; but as you've not shaved them off *very* closely, I think I can manage it," I continued doubtfully.

"Oh, oh, oh!" growled the maniac, while his eyes flashed fire at me. "There's one sitting by me that tells me you are dealing falsely with me—oh, lying villain! oh, perfidious wretch!" At that moment the door opened gently behind me, and the voice of Mr ——, the apothecary, whispered in a low hurried tone, "Doctor, I've got three of the inn-porters here, in the sitting-room." Though the whisper was almost inaudible even to me, when uttered close to my ear, to my utter amazement M—— had heard every syllable of it, and understood it too, as if some officious minion of Satan himself had quickened his ears, or conveyed the intelligence to him.

"Ah, ha, ha!—Ha, ha, ha!—fools! knaves, harpies!—and what are you and your hired desperadoes to *me?* Thus—thus do I outwit you—thus!" and, springing from his seat, he suddenly drew up the lower part of the window-frame, and looked through it—then at the razor—and again at me, with one of the most awful glances—full of dark diabolical meaning, the momentary suggestion, surely, of the great Tempter—that I ever encountered in my life.

"Which!—which!—which!" he muttered fiercely through his closed teeth, while his right foot rested on the window-seat, ready for him to spring out, and his eye travelled, as before, rapidly from the razor to the window. Can anything be conceived more palsying to the beholders? "Why did not you and your strong reinforcement spring at once upon him and overpower him?" possibly some one is asking. What! and he armed with a *naked razor?* His head might have been severed from his shoulders before we could have overmastered him—or we might ourselves—at least one of us—have been murdered, or cruelly maimed in the attempt. We knew not *what* to do! M—— suddenly withdrew his head from the window through which he had been gazing, with a shuddering, horror-stricken emotion, and groaned—"No! no! no! I won't—can't—for there's T—— standing just beneath, his face all blazing, and waiting with outspread arms to catch me," standing at the same time, shading his eyes with his left hand—when I whispered—"Now, now! go up to him—secure him—all three spring on him at once, and disarm him!" They obeyed me, and were in the act of rushing into the room, when M—— suddenly planted himself into a posture of defiance, elevated the razor to his throat, and almost *howled*—"One step—one step nearer—and I—I—I—so!" motioning as though he would draw it from one ear to the other. We all fell back, horror-struck, and in silence. What could we do? If we moved towards him, or made use of any threatening gestures, we should see the floor in an instant deluged with his blood. I once more crossed my arms on my breast, with an air of mute submission.

"Ha, ha!" he exclaimed after a pause, evidently pleased with such a demonstration of his power, "obedient, however!—well—that's one merit! But still, what a set of cowards—bullies—you must all be!—What!—all four of you afraid of *one* man?" In the course of his frantic gesticulations, he had drawn the razor so close to his neck,

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that its edge had slightly grazed the skin under his left ear, and a little blood trickled from it over his shoulders and breast.

"Blood!—*blood?* What a strange feeling! How coldly it fell on my breast!—How did I do it?—Shall—I—go—on, as I have made a beginning?" he exclaimed, drawling the words at great length. He shuddered, and—to my unutterable joy and astonishment—deliberately closed the razor, replaced it in its case, put both in the drawer; and having done all this, before we ventured to approach him, he fell at his full length on the floor, and began to yell in a manner that was perfectly frightful; but, in a few moments, he burst into tears, and cried and sobbed like a child. We took him up in our arms, he groaning, "Oh! shorn of my strength!—shorn! shorn like Samson! Why part with my weapon? The Philistines be upon me!"—and laid him down on the bed, where, after a few moments, he fell asleep. When he woke again, a strait waistcoat put all his tremendous struglings at defiance, though his strength seemed increased in a tenfold degree, and prevented his attempting either his own life or that of any one near him. When he found all his writhings and heavings utterly useless, he gnashed his teeth, the foam issued from his mouth, and he shouted, "I'll be even with you, you incarnate devils! I will!—I'll suffocate myself!" and he held his breath till he grew black in the face, when he gave over the attempt. It was found necessary to have him strapped down to the bed; and his howlings were so shocking and loud, that we began to think of removing him, even in that dreadful condition, to a madhouse. I ordered his head to be shaved again, and kept perpetually covered with cloths soaked in evaporating lotions; blisters to be applied behind each ear, and at the nape of the neck; leeches to the temples; and the appropriate internal medicines in such cases; and left him, begging I might be sent for instantly in the event of his getting worse.* Oh! I shall never forget this harrowing scene! My feelings were wound up almost to bursting; nor did they recover their proper tone for many a week. I cannot conceive that the people whom the New Testament speaks of as being "possessed of devils," could have been more dreadful in appearance, or more outrageous in their actions, than was M——; nor can I help suggesting the thought, that, possibly, they were in reality nothing more than the maniacs of the worst kind. And is not a man transformed into a devil, when his reason is utterly overturned?

On seeing M—— the next morning, I found he had passed a terrible night—that the constraint of the strait waistcoat filled him incessantly with a fury that was absolutely diabolical. His tongue was dreadfully lacerated; and the whites of his eyes, with perpetual straining, were discoloured with a reddish hue, like ferrets' eyes. He was truly a piteous spectacle! One's heart ached to look at him, and think for a moment of the fearful contrast he formed to the gay M—— he was only a few days before, the delight of refined society, and the idol of all his friends! He lay in a most precarious state for a fortnight; and though the fits of outrageous madness had ceased, or become much mitigated, and interrupted not unfrequently with "lucid intervals," as the phrase is, I began to be apprehensive of his sinking eventually into that hopeless, deplorable condition, idiocy. During one of his intervals of sanity, when the savage fiend relaxed for a moment the hold he had taken of the victim's faculties, M—— said something according with a fact which it was impossible for him to have any knowledge of by the senses, which was to me singular

* I ought to have mentioned, a little way back, that, in obedience to my hurried injunctions, the ladies suffered themselves, almost fainting with fright, to be conducted silently into the adjoining chambers—and it was well they did. Suppose they had uttered any sudden shriek, or attempted to interfere, or made a disturbance of any kind—what would have become of us all?

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and inexplicable.* It was about nine o'clock in the morning of the third day, after that on which the scene above described took place, that M——, who was lying in a state of the utmost lassitude and exhaustion, scarcely able to open his eyes, turned his head slowly towards Mr ——, the apothecary, who was sitting by his bedside, and whispering to him—"They are preparing to bury that wretched fellow next door—hush! hush!—one of the coffin trestles has fallen—hush!" Mr —— and the nurse, who had heard him, both strained their ears to listen, but could hear not even a mouse stirring.—"There's somebody come in—a lady, kissing his lips before he's screwed down—Oh! I hope she won't be scorch'd—that's all!" He then turned away his head, with no appearance of emotion, and presently fell asleep. Through mere curiosity, Mr —— looked at his watch, and from subsequent inquiry ascertained that, sure enough, about the time when his patient had spoken, they *were* about burying his neighbour; that one of the trestles *did* slip a little aside, and the coffin, in consequence, was near falling; and finally, marvellous to tell, that a lady, one of the deceased's relatives, I believe, did come and kiss the corpse, and cry bitterly over it! Neither Mr —— nor the nurse heard any noise whatever during the time of the burial preparations next door, for the people had been earnestly requested to be as quiet about them as possible, and really made no disturbance whatever. By what strange means he had acquired his information—whether or not he was indebted for some portion of it to the exquisite delicacy, the morbid sensitiveness of the organs of hearing, I cannot conjecture; but how are we to account for the latter part of what he uttered about the lady's kissing the corpse, &c.?—On another occasion, during one of his most placid moods, but *not* in any lucid interval, he insisted on my taking pen, ink, and paper, and turning amanuensis. To quiet him, I acquiesced, and wrote what he dictated; and the manuscript now lies before me, and is, *verbatim et literatim*, as follows:—

"I, T—— M——, saw—what saw I? A solemn silver grove—there were *innumerable spirits* † sleeping among the branches—(and it is this, though unobserved of naturalists, that makes the aspen-tree's leaves to quiver so much—it is this, I say, namely, the rustling movements of the spirits)—and in the midst of this grove was a beautiful site for a statue, and one there assuredly was—but *what* a statue! Transparent, of a stupendous size, through which—the sky was cloudy and troubled—a ship was seen sinking at sea, and the crew at cards: but the *good spirit* of the storm saved them, for he showed them the key of the universe: and a shoal of sharks, with murderous eyes, were disappointed of a meal. Lo, man, behold!—another part of this statue—what a one!—has a FISSURE in it: it opens—widens into a parlour, in darkness; and now shall be disclosed the *horror of horrors;* for lo! some one sitting—easy-chair—fiery face—fiend—fiend—O God! O God! save me!" cried he. He ceased speaking, with a shudder; nor did he resume the dictation, for he seemed in a moment to have forgotten that he had dictated at all. I preserved the paper; and, gibberish though it is, I consider it both curious and highly characteristic throughout. Judging from the latter part of it, where he speaks of a "*dark parlour, with some fiery-faced fiend sitting in an easy-chair*," and coupling this with various similar expressions and allusions which he made during his ravings, I felt convinced that his fancy was occupied with some one individual image of horror, which had scared him into madness, and now clung to his disordered faculties like a fiend. He often talked about "spectres," "spectral;" and

* This incident has been selected, by the conductor of a quarterly religious journal, called "*The Morning Watch*," as a striking instance of supernatural agency, and tending to confirm certain notions which have lately occasioned not a little astonishment and confusion in the world.

† The words in Italics were at the instance of M——.

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uttered incessantly the words "spectre-smitten." The nurse once asked him what he meant by these words. He started—grew disturbed—his eye glanced with affright—and he shook his head, exclaiming, "Horror!" A few days afterwards, he hired an amanuensis, who, of course, was duly apprised of the sort of person he had to deal with; and, after a painfully ludicrous scene, M—— attempting to beat down the man's terms from a guinea and a half a-week, to *half-a-crown*, he engaged him for *three guineas*, he said, and insisted on his taking up his station at the side of the bed, in order that he might minute down every word that was uttered. M—— told him he was going to dictate a *romance!*

It would have required, in truth, the "pen of a ready writer" to keep pace with poor M——'s utterance; for he raved on at a prodigious rate, in a strain, it need hardly be said, of unconnected absurdities. Really, it was inconceivable nonsense; rhapsodical rantings in the Maturin style, full of vaults, sepulchres, spectres, devils, magic; with here and there a thought of real poetry. It was piteous to peruse it! His amanuensis found it impossible to keep up with him, and therefore profited by a hint from one of us, and, instead of writing, merely moved his pen rapidly over the paper, scrawling all sorts of ragged lines and figures to resemble writing! M—— never asked him to read it over, nor requested to see it himself; but, after about fifty pages were done, dictated a title-page—pitched on publishers—settled the price and number of volumes—*four!*—and then exclaimed—"Well!—thank God—*that's* off my mind at last!" He never mentioned it afterwards; and his brother committed the *whole* to the flames about a week after.

M—— had not, however, yet done with his amanuensis, but put his services in requisition in quite another capacity—that of reader. Milton was the book he selected; and, actually, they went through very nearly nine books, M—— perpetually interrupting him with comments, sometimes saying surpassingly absurd, and occasionally very fine, forcible things. All this formed a truly touching illustration of that beautiful, often-quoted sentiment of Horace—

> Quo semel, est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
> Testa diu. *Epist.*, Lib. I. Ep. 2—69, 70.

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As there was no prospect of his speedily recovering the use of his reasoning faculties, he was removed to a private asylum, where I attended him regularly for more than six months. He was reduced to a state of drivelling idiocy—complete fatuity! Lamentable! heart-rending! Oh! how deplorable to see a man of superior intellect—one whose services are really wanted in society—the prey of madness!

Dr Johnson was well known to express a peculiar horror of insanity. "O God!" said he, "afflict my body with what tortures thou willest; but *spare my reason!*" Where is he that does not join him in uttering such a prayer?

It would be beside my purpose here to enter into abstract speculations, or purely professional details, concerning insanity; but one or two brief and simple remarks, the fruits of much experience and consideration, may perhaps be pardoned me.

It is still a *vexata quæstio* in our profession, whether persons of strong or weak minds—whether the ignorant or the highly cultivated—are most frequently the subjects of insanity. If we are disposed to listen to a generally shrewd and intelligent writer (Dr Monro, in his "*Philosophy of Human Nature*"), we are to understand that "children, and people of weak minds, are *never* subject to madness; for," adds the doctor, "how can he despair who cannot think?" Though the logic here is somewhat loose and leaky, I am disposed to agree with the doctor in the main; and I ground my acquiescence—

First, On the truth of Locke's distinction, laid down in his great work (Book ii., c. ii., §§ 12 and 13), where he mentions the difference "between idiots and madmen," and thus states

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the sum of his observations;—"In short, herein seems to lie the difference between idiots and madmen, that madmen put wrong ideas together, and do make wrong propositions, but argue and reason *right* from them; but idiots make very few or no propositions, and reason scarce at all."

Secondly, On the corroboration afforded to it by my own experience. I have generally found that those persons who are most *distinguished* for their powers of thought and reasoning when of sound mind, continue to exercise that power, but incorrectly, and be distinguished by their exercise of that power when of unsound mind—their understanding retaining, even after such a shock and revolution of its faculties, the bent and bias impressed upon it beforehand; and I have found, further, that it has been chiefly those of such character—*i. e.* thinkers—that have fallen into madness; and that it is the perpetual straining and taxing of their strong intellects at the expense of their bodies, that has brought them into such a calamity. Suppose, therefore, we say, in short, that *madness* is the fate of strong minds, or, at least, minds many degrees removed from weak; and *idiocy* of weak, imbecile minds. This supposition, however, involves a sorry sort of compliment to the fair sex; for it is notorious that the annual majority of those received into lunatic asylums are *females*.

I have found imaginative, fanciful people, the most liable to attacks of insanity; and have had under my care four such instances, or, at least, very nearly resembling the one I am now relating, in which insanity has ensued from sudden *fright*. And it is easily accounted for. The imagination—the predominant faculty—is immediately appealed to; and, eminently lively and tenacious of impressions, exerts its superior and more practised powers, at the expense of the judgment, or reason, which it tramples upon and crushes. There is then nothing left in the mind that may make head against this unnatural dominancy; and the result is generally not unlike that in the present instance. As for my general system of treatment, it may all be comprised in a word or two—acquiescence; submission; suggestion; soothing.* Had I pursued a different plan with M——, what might have been the disastrous issue!

To return, however: The reader may possibly recollect seeing something like the following expression, occurring in "The Broken Heart,"†—"A candle flickering and expiring in its socket, which suddenly shoots up into an instantaneous brilliance, and then is utterly extinguished." I have referred to it, merely because it affords a very apt illustration—apter than any that now suggests itself to me, of what sometimes takes place in madness. The roaring flame of insanity sinks into the sullen smouldering embers of complete fatuity, and remains so for months; when, like that of the candle just alluded to, it will instantaneously gather up and concentrate its expiring energies into one terrific blaze, one final paroxysm of outrageous mania; and, lo! it has consumed itself utterly—burnt itself out—and the patient is unexpectedly restored to reason. The experience of my medical readers, if it have lain at all in the track of insanity, must have presented such cases to their notice not unfrequently. However metaphysical ingenuity may set us speculating about "the why and wherefore" of it, the *fact* is undeniable. It was thus with Mr M——. He had sunk into the deplorable condition of a simple, harmless, melancholy idiot, and was released from formal constraint; but suddenly, one morning while at breakfast, he sprang upon the person who always attended him, and had not the man been very muscular, and practised in such matters, he must have been soon overpowered, and perhaps murdered. A long and deadly wrestle took place between them. Thrice they threw each other; and the keeper saw that the madman several times cast a longing eye towards a knife which lay on the break-

* See the case, "Intriguing and Madness," *supra*, p. 42.

† *Supra*, p. 58.

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fast table, and endeavoured to sway his antagonist so as to get himself within its reach. Both were getting exhausted with the prolonged struggle; and the keeper, really afraid for his life, determined to settle matters as soon as possible. The instant, therefore, that he could get his right arm disengaged, he hit poor M—— a dreadful blow on the side of the head, which felled him, and he lay senseless on the floor, the blood pouring fast from his ears, nose, and mouth. He was again confined in a strait waistcoat, and conveyed to bed, when, what with exhaustion, and the effect of the medicines which had been administered, he fell into profound sleep, which continued all day, and, with little intermission, through the night. When he awoke in the morning, lo! he was "in his right mind!" His calm tranquillised features, and the sobered expression of his eyes, showed that the sun of reason had really once more dawned upon his long-benighted faculties. Ay, he was

—— himself again.

I heard of the good news before I saw him; and, on hastening to his room, found it was indeed so; his altered appearance, at first sight, amply corroborated it! How different the mild sad smile now beaming on his pallid features, from the vacant stare, the unmeaning laugh of idiocy, or the fiendish glare of madness! The contrast was strong as that between the soft, stealing, expansive twilight, and the burning blaze of noonday. He spoke in a very feeble, almost inarticulate voice—complained of dreadful exhaustion—whispered something indistinctly about "waking from a long and dreary dream;" and said that he felt, as it were, only half awake, or alive. All was new, strange, startling! Fearful of taxing too much his new-born powers, I feigned an excuse, and took my leave—recommended him cooling and quieting medicines, and perfect seclusion from visitors. How exhilarated I felt my own spirits all that day!

He gradually, very gradually, but surely, recovered. One of the earliest indications of his reviving interest in life,

And all its busy, thronging scenes,

was an abrupt inquiry whether Trinity term had commenced, and whether or not he was now eligible to be called to the bar. He was utterly unconscious that *three* terms had flitted over him, while he lay in the gloomy wilderness of insanity; and when I satisfied him of this fact, he alluded, with a sigh, to the beautiful thought of one of our old dramatists, who, illustrating the unconscious lapse of years over "Endymion," makes one tell him—

And behold, the twig to which thou laidest thy head, is now become a tree! *

It was not till several days after his restoration to reason that I ventured to enter into anything like detailed

* *Endymion*, by JOHN LILLY. The context is so very beautiful that I am tempted to quote it:—

*Cynthia.* Endymion! Speak, sweet Endymion! Knowest thou not Cynthia?

*Endymion.* Oh, Heaven! what do I behold? Fair Cynthia? Divine Cynthia?

*Cynthia.* I am Cynthia, and thou Endymion.

*Endymion.* Endymion! What do I hear? What! a grey beard, hollow eyes, withered body, and decayed limbs—and all in one night?

*Eumenides.* One night! Thou hast slept here forty years, by what enchantress, as yet it is not known: and behold, the twig to which thou laidest thy head, is now become a tree! Callest thou not Eumenides to remembrance?

*Endymion.* Thy name I do remember by the sound, but thy favour I do not yet call to mind: only divine Cynthia, to whom time, fortune, death, and destiny are subject, I see and remember: and, in all humility, I regard and reverence.

*Cynthia.* You shall have good cause to remember Eumenides, who hath, for thy safety, forsaken his own solace.

*Endymion.* Am I that Endymion who was wont in court to lead my life, and in justs, tourneys, and arms, to exercise my youth? Am I that Endymion?

*Eumenides.* Thou art that Endymion, and I Eumenides! Wilt thou not yet call me to remembrance?

*Endymion.* Ah, sweet Eumenides! I now perceive thou art he, and that myself have the name of Endymion; but that this should be my body, I doubt; for how could my curled locks be turned to grey hair, and my strong body to a dying weakness—having waxed old not knowing it?—Act 5th, Scene I.

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conversation with him, or to make particular allusions to his late illness; and on this occasion it was that he related to me his rencontre with the fearful object which had overturned his reason; adding, with intense emotion, that not ten thousand a-year should induce him to live in the same chambers any more.

During the course of his progress towards complete recovery, memory shot its strengthening rays farther and farther back into the inspissated gloom in which the long interval of insanity had shrouded his mind; but it was too dense, too "palpable an obscure," to be ever completely and thoroughly illuminated. The rays of recollection, however, settled distinctly on some of the more prominent points; and I was several times astonished by his sudden reference to things which he had said and done during the "very depth and quagmire of his disorder."* He asked me once, for instance, whether he had not made an attempt on his life, and with a razor, and how it was that he did not succeed. He had no recollection, however, of the long and deadly struggle with his keeper—at least he never made the slightest allusion to it, nor, of course, did any one else.

"I don't much mind talking these horrid things over with you, doctor, for you know all the *ins and outs* of the whole affair; but if any of my friends or relatives presume to torture me with any allusions or inquiries of this sort—I'll fight them! they'll drive me mad again!" The reader may suppose the hint was not disregarded. All recovered maniacs have a dread—an absolute horror—of any reference being made to their madness, or anything they have said or done during the course of it; and is it not easily accounted for?

"Did the horrible spectre which occasioned your illness in the first instance, ever present itself to you afterwards?" I once inquired. He paused and turned pale. Presently he replied, with considerable agitation—"Yes, yes—it scarcely ever left me. It has not always preserved its spectral consistency, but has entered into the most astounding, the most preposterous combinations conceivable, with other objects and scenes—all of them, however, more or less, of a distressing or fearful character—many of them terrific!" I begged him, if it were not unpleasant to him, to give me a specimen of them.

"It is certainly far from gratifying to trace scenes of such shame and horror; but I will comply as far as I am able," said he, rather gloomily. "Once I saw him" (meaning the spectre) "leading on an army of huge speckled and crested serpents against me; and when they came upon me—for I had no power to run away—I suddenly found myself in the midst of a pool of stagnant water, absolutely alive with slimy shapeless reptiles; and, while endeavouring to make my way out, *he* rose to the surface, his face hissing in the water, and blazing bright as ever! Again, I thought I saw him in single combat, by the gates of Eden, with Satan—and the air thronged and heated with swart faces looking on!" This was unquestionably some dim confused recollection of the Milton readings, in the earlier part of his illness. "Again, I thought I was in the act of opening my snuff-box, when *he* issued from it, diminutive, at first, in size—but swelling soon into gigantic proportions, and his fiery features diffusing a light and heat around, that absolutely scorched and blasted! At another time, I thought I was gazing upwards on a sultry summer sky; and, in the midst of a luminous fissure in it, made by the lightning, I distinguished *his* accursed figure, with his glowing features wearing an expression of horror, and his limbs outstretched, as if he had been hurled down from some height or other, and was falling through the sky towards *me*. He came—he came—flung himself into my recoiling arms—and clung to me—burning, scorching, withering my soul within me! I thought, further, that I was all the while the subject of strange, paradoxical, contra-

* Sir Thomas Browne.

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dictory feelings towards him—that I, at one and the same time, loved and loathed, feared and despised him!" * He mentioned several other instances of the confusions in his "chamber of imagery." I told him of his sudden exclamation concerning Mr T——'s burial, and its singular corroboration; but he either did not, or affected not, to recollect anything about it. He told me he had a full and distinct recollection of being for a long time possessed with the notion of making himself a "sacrifice" of some sort or other, and that he was seduced or goaded on to do so by the spectre, by the most dazzling temptations, and under the most appalling threats—one of which latter was, that God would plunge him into hell for ever, if he did not offer up himself—that if he did so, he should be a sublime spectacle to the universe, &c. &c. &c.

"Do you recollect anything about dictating a novel or a romance?" He started, as if struck with some sudden recollection. "No—but I'll tell you what I recollect well—that the spectre and I were set to copy all the tales and romances that ever had been written, in a large, bold, round hand, and then translate them into Greek or Latin verse!" He smiled, nay, even laughed at the thought, almost the first time of his giving way to such emotions since his recovery. He added, that as to the latter, the idea of the utter hopelessness of ever getting through such a stupendous undertaking never once presented itself to him, and that he should have gone on with it, but that he lost his inkstand!

"Had you ever a clear and distinct idea that you had lost the right use of reason?"

"Why, about that, to tell the truth, I've been puzzling myself a good deal, and yet I cannot say anything decisive. I *do* fancy that, at times, I had short, transient glimpses into the real state of things, but they were so evanescent. I am conscious of feeling, at these times, incessant fury, arising from a sense of personal constraint, and I longed once to strangle some one who was giving me medicine."

But one of the most singular of all is yet to come. He still persisted—yes, *then*—after his complete recovery, as we supposed, in avowing his belief that we had hired a huge boa serpent from Exeter 'Change to come and keep constant watch over him, to constrain his movements when he threatened to become violent; that it lay constantly coiled up under his bed for that purpose; that he could now and then feel the motions—the writhing undulating motions of its coils—hear it utter a sort of *sigh*, and see it often elevate its head over the bed, and play with its slippery, delicate, forked tongue, over his face, to soothe him to sleep. When poor M——, with a serious, earnest air, assured me he STILL believed all this, my hopes of his complete and final restoration to sanity were dashed at once! How such an absurd—in short, I have no terms in which I may adequately characterise it—how, I say, such an idea could possibly be persisted in, I was bewildered in attempting to conceive. I frequently strove to reason him out of it, but in vain. To no purpose did I burlesque and caricature the notion almost beyond all bounds; it was useless to remind him of the blank impossibility of it; he regarded me with such a face as I should exhibit to a fluent personage, quite in earnest in demonstrating to me that the moon was made of green cheese.

I have once before heard of a patient who, after recovering from an attack of insanity, retained one solitary crotchet—one little stain or speck of lunacy—about which, and which alone, he was mad to the end of his life. I supposed such to be the case with M——. It was possible—barely so, I thought—that he might entertain the preposterous notion about the boa, and yet be sound in the general texture of his mind. I prayed God it might; I "hoped against hope." The last evening I ever spent with him was occupied with my endeavouring, once for all, to disabuse him of the

* A very curious case has been handed to me, corroboratory of this strange condition of feeling; but I am not allowed to make it public

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idea in question; and, in the course of our conversation, he disclosed one or two little symptoms, specks of lunacy, which made me leave him, filled with disheartening doubts as to the probability of a permanent recovery.

* * * *

My worst fears were awfully realised. In about five years from the period above alluded to, M——, who had got married, and had enjoyed excellent general health, was spending the summer with his family at Brussels—and one night destroyed himself—alas! alas! *destroyed* himself in a manner too terrible to mention!

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# CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE MARTYR PHILOSOPHER.

It has been my lot to witness many dreadful deathbeds. I am not overstating the truth when I assert, that nearly eight out of every ten that have come under my personal observation—of course, excluding *children*—have more or less partaken of this character. I know only one way of accounting for it, and some may accuse me of cant for adverting to it—men will not LIVE as if they were to die. They are content to let that event come upon them "like a thief in the night."* They grapple with their final foe, not merely unprepared, but absolutely incapacitated for the struggle, and then wonder and wail at their being overcome and "trodden under foot." I have, in some of the foregoing chapters, attempted to sketch three or four dreary scenes of this description, my pencil trembling in my hand the while; and could I but command colours dark enough, it were yet in my power to portray others far more appalling than any that have gone before—cases of those who have left life "clad in horror's hideous robe"—"*whose sun has gone down at noon in darkness,*" if I may be pardoned for quoting the fearful language of a very unfashionable book.

Now, however, for a while at least, let the storm pass away; the accumulated clouds of guilt, despair, madness, disperse; and the lightning of the fiercer passions cease to shed its disastrous glare over our minds. Let us rejoice beneath the serened heavens; let us seek sunnier spots—by turning to the more peaceful pages of humanity. Let me attempt to lay before the reader a short account of one whose exit was eminently calm, tranquil, and dignified; who did not skulk into his grave with shame and fear, but laid down life with honour; leaving behind him the influence of his greatness and goodness, like the evening sun—who smiles sadly on the sweet scenes he is quitting, and a holy lustre glows long on the features of nature—

> Quiet, as a nun
> Breathless with adoration.—WORDSWORTH.

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Even were I disposed, I could not gratify the reader with anything like a fair sketch of the early days of Mr E——. I have often lamented, that, knowing as I did the simplicity and frankness of his disposition, I did not once avail myself of several opportunities which fell in my way of becoming acquainted with the leading

* One of my patients, whom a long course of profligacy had brought to a painful and premature deathbed, once quoted this striking Scriptural expression when within less than an hour of his end, and with a thrill of terror.

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particulars of his life. Now, however, as is generally the case, I can but deplore my negligence, when remedying it is impossible. All that I have now in my power to record, are some particulars of his latter days. Interesting I know they will be considered: may they prove instructive! I hope the few records I have here preserved, will show how a mind, long disciplined by philosophy, and strengthened by religious principle, may triumph over the assault of evils and misfortunes combined against its *expiring* energies. It is fitting, I say, the world should hear how nobly E—— surmounted such a sudden influx of disasters as have seldom before burst overwhelmingly upon a deathbed.

And should this chapter of my Diary chance to be seen by any of his relatives and early friends, I hope the reception it shall meet with from the public, may stimulate them to give the world some fuller particulars of Mr E——'s valuable, if not very varied life. More than seven years have elapsed since his death; and, as yet, the only intimation the public has had of the event, has been in the dreary corner of the public prints allotted to "*Deaths*"—and a brief enumeration in one of the quarterly journals of some of his leading contributions to science. The world at large, however, scarcely know that he ever lived—or, at least, *how* he lived or died. But how often is such the fate of modest merit!

My first acquaintance with Mr E—— commenced accidentally, not long before his death, at one of the evening meetings of a learned society, of which we were both members. The first glimpse I caught of him interested me much, and inspired me with a kind of reverence for him. He came into the room within a few minutes of the chair's being taken,* and walked quietly and slowly, with a kind of stooping gait, to one of the benches near the fireplace, where he sat down without taking off his greatcoat, and, crossing his gloved hands on the knob of a high walking-stick, he rested his chin on them, and in that attitude continued throughout the evening. He removed his hat when the chairman made his appearance; and I never saw a finer head in my life. The crown was quite bald, but the base was fringed round, as it were, with a little soft, glossy, silver-hued hair, which in the distance looked like a faint halo. His forehead was of noble proportions; and, in short, there was an expression of serene intelligence in his features, blended with meekness and dignity, which quite enchanted me.

"Pray, who is that gentleman?" I inquired of my friend Dr D——, who was sitting beside me. "Do you mean that elderly thin man, sitting near the fireplace, with a greatcoat on?"—"The same."—"Oh! it is Mr E——, one of the very ablest men in the room, though he talks the least," whispered my friend; "and a man who comes nearest to my *beau ideal* of a philosopher of any man I ever knew or heard of in the present day."

"Why, he does not seem very well known here," said I, observing that he neither spoke to, nor was spoken to by any of the members present. "Ah, poor Mr E—— is breaking up, I'm afraid, and that very fast," replied my friend with a sigh. "He comes but seldom to our evening meetings, and is not ambitious of making many acquaintance." I intimated an eager desire to be introduced to him. "Oh, nothing easier," replied my friend; "for I know him more familiarly than any one present, and he is, besides, simple as a child in his manners, even to eccentricity, and the most amiable man in the world. I'll introduce you when the meeting's over." While we were thus whispering together, the subject of our conversation suddenly rose from his seat, and, with a little trepidation of manner, addressed a few words to the chair, in correction of some assertions which he interrupted a member in advancing. It was something, if I recollect right, about the atomic theory, and was received with marked deference by the presi-

* "Les sociétés savantes en Angleterre sont réglés par les mêmes lois d'etiquette que les sociétés politiques."—*Note by the French Translator.*

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dent, and general "Hear! hears!" from the members. He then resumed his seat, in which he was presently followed by the speaker, whom he had evidently discomfited; his eyes glistened, and his cheeks were flushed with the effort he had made, and he did not rise again till the conclusion of the sitting. We then made our way to him, and my friend introduced me. He received me politely and frankly. He complained, in a weak voice, that the walk thither had quite exhausted him—that he feared his health was failing him, &c.

"Why, Mr E——, you *look* very well," said my friend.

"Ay, perhaps I do; but you know how little faith is to be put in the hale looks of an old and weak man. Age generally puts a good face on bad matters, even to the last," he added with a smile and a shake of the head.

"A sad night!" he exclaimed, on hearing the wind howling drearily without, for we were standing by a window at the north-east corner of the large building; and a March wind swept cruelly by, telling bitter things to the old and feeble who had to face it. "Allow me to recommend that you wrap up your neck and breast well," said I.

"I intend it, indeed," he replied, as he was folding up a large silk handkerchief. "One must guard one's candle with one's hand, or Death will blow it out in a moment. That's the sort of treatment we old people get from him; no ceremony—he waits for one at a bleak corner, and puffs out one's expiring light with a breath; and then hastens on to the more vigorous torch of youth."

"Have you a coach?" inquired Dr D——. "A coach! I shall *walk* it in less than twenty minutes," said Mr E——, buttoning his coat up to the chin.

"Allow me to offer you both a seat in mine," said I; "it is at the door, and I am driving towards your neighbourhood." He and Dr D—— accepted the offer, and in a few minutes' time we entered and drove off. We soon set down the latter, who lived close by, and then my new philosophic friend and I were left together. Our conversation turned, for a while, on the evening's discussion at the society; and, in a very few words, remarkably well chosen, he pointed out what he considered to have been errors committed by Sir —— and Dr ——, the principal speakers. I was not more charmed by the lucidness of his views, than by the unaffected diffidence with which they were expressed.

"Well," said he, after a little pause in our conversation, "your carriage motion is mighty pleasant! It seduces one into a feeling of indolence! these delicious, soft, yielding cushioned backs and seats—they would make a man loath to use his legs again! Yet I never kept a carriage in my life, though I have often wanted one, and could easily have afforded it once." I asked him why? He replied, "It was not because he feared childish accusations of ostentation, nor yet in order to save money, but because he thought it becoming to a rational being to be content with the natural means God has given him, both as to matter of necessity and pleasure. It was an insult," he said, "to Nature while she was in full vigour, and had exhibited little or no deficiency in her functions—to hurry to *Art*. For my own part," he continued, "I have always found a quiet but exquisite satisfaction, in continuing independent of *her* assistance, though at the cost of some occasional inconvenience: it gives you a consciousness of relying incessantly on Him who made you, and sustains you in being. Do you recollect the solemn saying of Johnson to Garrick, on seeing the immense levies the latter had made on the resources of ostentatious, ornamental art? 'Davie, Davie, these are the things that make a deathbed terrible!'" I said something about Diogenes. "Ah!" he replied quickly, "the other extreme. He accused nature of superfluity, redundancy. A proper subordination of externals to her use is part of her province; else why is she placed among so many materials, and with such facilities of using them? My principle, if such it may be called, is, that art may *minister* to nature, but not

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*pamper* or *surfeit* her with superfluities.

"You would laugh, perhaps, to come to my house, and see the extent to which I have carried my principles into practice. I—yes, I—whose life has been devoted, among other things, to the discovery of mechanical contrivances! You, accustomed, perhaps, to the elegant redundancies of these times, may consider my house and furniture absurdly plain and naked—a tree stript of its leaves, where the birds are left to lodge on the bare branches! But I want little, and do not 'want that little long.'—Stop, however, here is my house! Come—a laugh, you know, is good before bed—will you have it now? Come, see a curiosity—a Diogenes, but no Cynic!" Had the reader seen the modesty, the cheerfulness, the calmness of manner with which Mr E——, from time to time, joined in the conversation of which the above is the substance, and been aware of the weight due to his sentiments, as those of one who had really LIVED UP to them all his life—who had earned a noble character in the philosophical world—if he be aware how often old age and pedantry, grounded on a small reputation, are blended in repulsive union—he might not consider the trouble I have taken thrown away, in recording this my first conversation with Mr E——. He was, indeed, an instance of "philosophy teaching by example;" a sort of character to be sought out for in life, as one at whose feet we may safely sit down and learn.

I could not accept of Mr E——'s invitation that evening, as I had a patient to see a little farther on; but I promised him an early call. All my way home my mind was filled with the image of E——, and partook of the tranquillity and pensiveness of its guest.

I scarcely know how it was, but, with all my admiration of Mr E——, I suffered the month of May to approach its close before I again encountered him. It was partly owing to a sudden increase of business, created by a raging scarlet fever, and partly occasioned by illness in my own family. I often thought and talked, however, of the philosopher, for that was the name he went by with Dr D—— and myself. Mr E—— had invited us both to take "an old-fashioned friendly cup of tea" with him; and accordingly, about six o'clock, we found ourselves driving down to his house. On our way, Dr D—— told me that our friend had been a widower nearly five years; and that the loss, somewhat sudden, of his amiable and accomplished wife, had worked a great change in him, by divesting him of nearly all interest in life or its concerns. He pursued even his philosophical occupations with languor—more from a kind of habit than inclination. Still he retained the same evenness and cheerfulness which had distinguished him through life. But the blow had been struck which had severed him from the world's joys and engagements. He might be compared to a great tree torn up by the root, and laid prostrate by a storm, yet which dies not all at once. The sap is not instantaneously dried up; but for weeks, or even months, you may see the smaller branches still shooting unconsciously into short-lived existence all fresh and tender from the womb of their dead mother; and a rich green mantle of leaves long concealing from view the poor fallen trunk beneath. Such was the pensive turn my thoughts had taken by the time we had reached Mr E——'s door.

It was a fine summer evening—the hour of calm excitement. The old-fashioned window-panes of the house we had stopped at, shone like small sheets of fire in the steady slanting rays of the retiring sun. It was the first house of a respectable antique-looking row, in the suburbs of London, which had been built in the days of Henry the Eighth. Three stately poplars stood sentries before the gateway.

"Well, here we are at last, at *Plato's Porch*, as I've christened it," said Dr D——, knocking at the door. On entering the parlour—a large old-fashioned room, furnished with the utmost simplicity consistent with comfort—we found Mr E—— sitting near the



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window, reading. He was in a brown dressing-gown and study cap. He rose and welcomed us cheerfully. "I have been looking into La Place," said he, in the first pause which ensued, "and, a little before your arrival, had flattered myself that I had detected some erroneous calculations; and only look at the quantity of evidence that was necessary to convince me that I was a simpleton by the side of La Place!" pointing to two or three sheets of paper crammed with small algebraical characters in pencil—a fearful array of symbols—"$\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$ 3 $a^2$, $\square \frac{y^2}{z^2}$ + 9 − $n$ = 9; $n$ × log. $e$"—and sines, co-sines, series, &c., without end. I had the curiosity to take up the volume in question while he was speaking to Dr D——, and noticed on the fly-leaf the complimentary autograph of the Marquis La Place, who had sent his work to Mr E——. Tea was presently brought in; and as soon as the plain old-fashioned china, &c., had been placed on the table by the man-servant—himself a knowing old fellow as I ever saw in my life—Miss E——, the philosopher's niece, made her appearance—an elegant, unaffected girl, with the same style of features as her uncle.

"I can give a shrewd guess at your thoughts, Dr ——," said Mr E—— smiling, as he caught my eye following the movements of the man-servant till he left the room. "You fancy my keeping a man-servant to wait at table does not tally very well with what I said the last time I had the pleasure of seeing you."

"O dear! I'm sure you're mistaken, Mr E——. I was struck with the singularity of his countenance and manners—those of a stanch old family servant."

"Ah, Joseph is a vast favourite with my uncle!" said Miss E——, "I can assure you, and fancies himself nearly as great a man as his master."

"Why, as far as the *pratique* of the laboratory is concerned, I doubt if his superior is to be found in London. He knows *it*, and all my ways, as well as he knows the palm of his own hand! He has the neatest way in the world of making hydrogen gas, and, what is more, found it out himself," said Mr E——, explaining the process; "and then he is a miracle of cleanliness and care! He has not cost me ten shillings in breakage since I knew him. He moves among my brittle wares like a cat on a glass wall."

"And then he writes and reads for my uncle—does all the minor work of the laboratory — goes on errands — waits at table—in short, he's invaluable," said Miss E——.

"Quite a *factotum*, I protest!" exclaimed Dr D——.

"You'd lose your *better half*, then, if he were to die, I suppose," said I quickly.

"No! *that* can happen but *once*," replied Mr E——, alluding to the death of his wife. Conversation flagged for a moment. "You've forgotten," at length said E——, breaking the melancholy pause, "the very chiefest of poor Joseph's accomplishments—What an admirable unwearied *nurse* he is to me!" At that moment Joseph entered the room, with a note in his hand, which he gave to Mr E——. I guessed where it came from, for happening, a few moments before, to cast my eye to the window, I saw a footman walking up to the door; and there was no mistaking the gorgeous scarlet liveries of the Duke of ——. E——, after glancing over the letter, begged us to excuse him for a minute or two, as the man was waiting for an answer.

"*You*, of course, knew what my uncle alluded to," said Miss E——, addressing Dr D—— in a low tone, as soon as E—— had closed the door after him, "when he spoke of Joseph's being a *nurse*—don't you?" Dr D—— nodded. "My poor uncle," she continued, addressing me, "has been, for nearly *twenty-five* years, afflicted with a dreadful disease in the spine; and, during all that time, he has suffered a perfect martyrdom from it. He could not stand *straight* up if it were to save his life, and he is obliged to sleep in a bed of a very curious description—the joint contrivance of himself and Joseph.

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He takes nearly half an ounce of laudanum every night, at bedtime; without which, the pains, which are always most excruciating at night-time, would not suffer him to get a moment's sleep! —Oh, how often have I seen him rolling about on this carpet and hearth-rug—yes, even in the presence of visitors—in a perfect ecstasy of agony, and uttering the most heart-breaking groans!"

"And I can add," said Dr D——, "that he is the most perfect Job—the most angelic sufferer I ever saw!"

"Indeed, indeed, he is!" rejoined Miss E—— with emotion. "I can say, with perfect truth, that I never once heard him murmur or complain at his hard fate. When I have been expressing my sympathies, during the extremity of his anguish, he has gasped, 'Well, well, it *might* have been worse!'" —Miss E—— suddenly raised her handkerchief to her eyes, for they were overflowing.

"Do you see that beautiful little picture hanging over the mantelpiece?" she inquired, after a pause, which neither Dr D—— nor I seemed inclined to interrupt—pointing to an exquisite oil-painting of the crucifixion. "I have seen my poor uncle lying down on the floor, while in the most violent paroxysms of pain, and, with his eyes fixed intensely on that picture, exclaim —'*Thine* were greater—thine were greater!' And then he has presently clasped his hands upwards; a smile has beamed upon his pallid quivering features, and he has told me the pain was abated."

"I once was present during one of these painfully interesting scenes," said Dr D——, "and have seen such a heavenly radiance on his countenance, as could not have been occasioned by the mere sudden cessation of the anguish he had been suffering."

"Does not this strange disorder abate with his increasing years?" I inquired.

"Alas, no!" replied Miss E——; "but is, if possible, more frequent and severe in its seizures. Indeed, we all think it is wearing him out fast. But for the unwearied services of that faithful creature, Joseph, who sleeps in the same room with him, my uncle must have died long ago."

"How did this terrible disorder attack Mr E——, and when?" I inquired. I was informed that he himself originated the complaint with an injury he sustained when a very young man: he was riding, one day, on horseback, and his horse, suddenly rearing backward, Mr E——'s back came in violent contact with a plank, projecting from behind a cart loaded with timber. He was besides, however, subject to a constitutional feebleness in the spine, derived from his father and grandfather. He had consulted almost every surgeon of eminence in England, and a few on the Continent; and spent a little fortune among them —but all had been in vain.

"Really, you would be quite surprised, Doctor ——," said Miss E——, "to know that, though such a martyr to pain, and now in his sixty-fourth year, my uncle is more active in his habits, and regular in his hours, than I ever knew any one. He rises almost invariably at four o'clock in summer, and at six in winter—and this though so helpless, that, without Joseph's assistance, he could not dress himself"——

"Ah! by the way," interrupted Dr D——, "that is another peculiarity in Mr E——'s case: he is subject to a sort of nightly paralysis of the upper extremities, from which he does not completely recover till he has been up for some two or three hours."

How little had I thought of the under-current of agony flowing incessantly beneath the calm surface of his cheerful and dignified demeanour! O philosophy!—O Christian philosophy! —I had failed to detect any marks of suffering in his features, though I had now had two interviews with him—so completely, even hitherto, had "his unconquerable mind conquered the clay"—as one of our old writers expresses it. If I had admired and respected him heretofore, on the ground of Dr D——'s opinion, how did I now feel disposed to adore him! I looked on him as an instance of long-tried

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heroism and fortitude, almost unparalleled in the history of man. Such thoughts were passing through my mind, when Mr E—— re-entered the room. What I had heard during his absence made me now look on him with tenfold interest. I wondered that I had overlooked his stoop—and the permanent print of pain on his pallid cheek. I gazed at him, in short, with feelings of sympathy and reverence, akin to those called forth by a picture of one of the ancient martyrs.

"I'm sorry to have been deprived of your company so long," said he; "but I have had to answer an invitation, and several questions besides, from—I daresay you know whom?" addressing Dr D——.

"I can guess, on the principle *ex ungue*—the gaudy livery 'vaunts of royalty'—eh? Is it ——?"

"Yes. He has invited me to dine with Lord ——, Sir ——, and several other members of the —— Society, at ——, this day week, but I have declined. At my time of life, I can't stand late hours and excitement. Besides, one must learn betimes to *wean* from the world, or be suddenly snatched from it screaming like a child," said Mr E——, with an impressive air.

"I believe you are particularly intimate with ——; at least I have heard so. Are you?" inquired Dr D——.

"No. I might possibly have been so, for —— has shown great consideration towards me; but I can assure you, I am the sought, rather than the seeker, and have been all my life."

"It is often fatal to philosophical independence to approach too frequently, and too nearly, the magic circle of the court," said I.

"True. Science is, and should be, aspiring. So is the eagle; but the royal bird never approaches so near the sun as to be drowned in its blaze. Q—— has been nothing since he became a courtier." * * *

"What do you think of ——'s pretensions to science, generally, and his motives for seeking so anxiously the intimacy of the learned?" inquired Dr D——.

"Why, ——," replied E——, with some hesitation, "'tis a wonderful thing for him to know even a fiftieth part of what he does. He is popularly acquainted with the outlines of most of the leading sciences. He went through a regular course of readings with my admirable friend ——: but he has not the *time* necessary to insure a successful prosecution of science. It is, however, infinitely advantageous to science and literature, to have the willing and active patronage of royalty. I never knew him exhibit one trait of overbearing dogmatism; and that is saying much for one whom all flatter always. It *has* struck me, however, that he has rather too anxious an eye towards securing the character and applause of a MÆCENAS."

"Pray, Mr E——, do you recollect mentioning to me an incident which occurred at a large dinner-party given by ——, where you were present, when Dr —— made use of these words to ——: '*Does not your —— think it possible for a man to pelt another with potatoes, to provoke him to fling peaches in return for want of other missiles?*' and the furious answer was —— ——."

"We will drop that subject, if you please," said E—— coldly, at the same time colouring, and giving my friend a peculiar monitory look.

"I know well, personally, that —— has done very many noble things in his day—most of them, comparatively, in secret; and one magnificent action he has performed lately towards a man of scientific eminence, who has been as unfortunate as he is deserving, which will probably never come to the public ear, unless —— and —— die suddenly," said Mr ——. He had scarcely uttered these words, when he turned suddenly pale, laid down his tea-cup with a quivering hand, and slipped slowly from his chair to the floor, where he lay at his full length, rolling to and fro, with his hands pressed upon the lower part of his spine—and all the while uttering deep sighs and groans. The big drops of perspiration rolling from his forehead down his cheeks, evidenced the dreadful agony he was enduring. Dr D——

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and I both knelt down on one knee by his side, proffering our assistance; but he entreated us to leave him to himself for a few moments, and he should soon be better.

"Emma!" he gasped, calling his niece—who, sobbing bitterly, was at his side in a moment—"kiss me—that's a dear girl—and go up to bed; but on your way, send Joseph here directly." She retired; and in a few moments Joseph entered hastily, with a broad leathern band, which he drew round his master's waist and buckled tightly. He then pressed with both his hands for some time upon the immediate seat of the pain. Our situation was embarrassing and distressing—both of us medical men, and yet compelled to stand by, mere passive spectators of agonies we could neither alleviate nor remove.

"Do you absolutely *despair* of discovering what the precise nature of this complaint is?" I inquired in an under tone.

"Yes—in common with every one else that has tried to discover it. That it is an affection of the spinal chord, is clear; but what is the immediate exciting cause of these tremendous paroxysms, I cannot conjecture," replied Dr D——.

"What have been the principal remedies resorted to?"

"Oh, everything—almost everything that the wit of man could devise—local and general bleedings to a dreadful extent; irritations and counter irritations without end; electricity—galvanism—all the resources of medicine and surgery, have been ransacked to no purpose. Look at him!" whispered Dr D——, "look—look—do you see how his whole body is drawn together in a heap, while his limbs are quivering as though they would fall from him? See—see—how they are now struck out, and plunging about, his hands clutching convulsively at the carpet—scarcely a trace of humanity in his distorted features—as if this great and good man were the sport of a demon!"

"O gracious God! can we do *nothing* to help him?" I inquired, suddenly approaching him, almost stifled with my emotions. Mr E—— did not seem conscious of our approach; but lay rather quieter, groaning—"Oh—oh—oh—that it would please God to dismiss me from my sufferings!"

"My dear, dear Mr E——," exclaimed Dr D——, excessively agitated, "can we do nothing for you? Can't we be of *any* service to you?"

"Oh, none — none — none!" he groaned, in tones expressive of utter hopelessness. For more than a quarter of an hour did this victim of disease continue writhing on the floor, and we standing by, "physicians of no value!" The violence of the paroxysm abated at length, and again we stooped, for the purpose of raising him and carrying him to the sofa; but he motioned us off, exclaiming so faintly as to be almost inaudible—"No, no, thank you—I must not be moved for this hour, and when I am, it must be to bed."—"Then we will bid you good evening, and pray to God you may be better in the morning." "Yes—yes; better—better; good—good-by," he muttered indistinctly.

"Master's falling asleep, gentlemen, as he always does after these fits," said Joseph, who had his arms round his suffering master's neck. We, of course, left immediately, and met Miss E—— in the passage, muffled in her shawl, and sobbing as if she would break her heart.

Dr D—— told me, as we were driving home, that, about two years ago, E—— made a week's stay with him; and that, on one occasion, he endured agonies of such dreadful intensity as nothing could abate, or in any measure alleviate, but two doses of laudanum of nearly half an ounce each, within half an hour of each other; and that even then he did not sleep for more than two hours. "When he awoke," continued my friend, "he was lying on the sofa in a state of the utmost exhaustion, the perspiration running from him like water. I asked him if he did not sometimes yield to such thoughts as were suggested to Job by his impetuous friends—to 'curse God and die;' to repine at the long and

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lingering tortures he had endured nearly all his life, for no apparent crime of his own? 'No, no,' he replied calmly; 'I've suffered too long an apprenticeship to pain for that! I own I was at first a little disobedient—a little restive—but now I am learning resignation! Would not useless fretting serve to enhance—to aggravate my pains?' 'Well!' I exclaimed, 'it puzzles my theology—if anything could make me sceptical'——. E—— saw the train of my thoughts, and interrupted me, laying his white wasted hand on mine—'I always strive to bear in mind that I am in the hands of a God as GOOD as great, and that I am not to doubt his goodness, because I cannot exactly see *how* he brings it about. Doubtless there are *reasons* for my suffering what I do, which, though at present incomprehensible to me, would appear abundantly satisfactory could I be made acquainted with them. Oh, Dr D——, *what* would become of me,' said E—— solemnly, 'were I, instead of the rich consolations of religion, to have nothing to rely on but the disheartening speculations of infidelity!—If in *this* world only I have hope,' he continued, looking steadfastly upwards, 'I am of all men most miserable!'—Is it not dangerous to know such a man, lest one should feel inclined to fall down and worship him?" inquired my friend. Indeed I thought so. Surely E—— was a *miracle* of patience and fortitude! and how he had contrived to make his splendid advancements in science, whilst subject to such almost unheard-of tortures, both as to duration and intensity—had devoted himself so successfully to the prosecution of studies requiring habits of long, patient, profound abstraction—was to me inconceivable.

How few of us are aware of what is suffered by those with whom we are most intimate! How few know the heavy counterbalancings of popularity and eminence—the exquisite agonies, whether physical or mental, inflicted by one irremovable "thorn in the flesh!" Oh! the miseries of that eminence whose chief prerogative too often is—

Above the vulgar herd *to rot in state!*

How little had I thought, while gazing at the —— Rooms on this admirable man, first fascinated with the *placidity* of his noble features, that I looked at one who had equal claims to the character of a MARTYR and a philosopher! How my own petty grievances dwindled away in comparison with those endured by E——! How contemptible the pusillanimity I had often exhibited!

And do YOU, reader, who, if a man, are perhaps in the habit of cursing and blaspheming while smarting under the toothach, or any of those minor "ills that flesh is heir to," think, at such times, of poor, meek, suffering E——, and be silent!

I could not dismiss from my mind the painful image of E—— writhing on the floor, as I have above described, but lay the greater part of the night reflecting on the probable nature of his unusual disorder. Was it anything of a spasmodic nature? Would not *such* attacks have worn him out long ago? Was it one of the remoter effects of partial paralysis? Was it a preternatural pressure on the spinal chord, occasioned by fracture of one of the vertebræ, or enlargement of the intervertebral ligaments? Or was it owing to a thickening of the medulla-spinalis itself?

Fifty similar conjectures passed through my mind, excited as well by the singularity of the disease as by sympathy for the sufferer. Before I fell asleep, I resolved to call on him during the next day, and inquire carefully into the nature of the symptoms, in the forlorn hope of hitting on some means of mitigating his sufferings.

By twelve o'clock at noon I was set down again at his door. A maid-servant answered my summons, and told me that Mr E—— and Joseph were busily engaged in the "*Labbory!*" She took in my card to him, and returned with her master's compliments, and he would thank me to step in. I followed the girl to the laboratory. On opening the door, I saw E—— and his trusty work-fellow, Joseph, busily engaged fusing some species of metal. The former was dressed as on the pre-

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ceding evening, with the addition of a long black apron—looked heated and flushed with exercise; and, with his stooping gait, was holding some small implement over the furnace, while Joseph, on his knees, was puffing away at the fire with a small pair of bellows. —To anticipate for a moment. How little did E—— or I imagine, that this was very nearly the *last time* of his ever again entering the scene of his long and useful scientific labours!

I was utterly astonished to see one whose sufferings over-night had been so dreadful, quietly pursuing his avocations in the morning, as though nothing had happened to him!

"Excuse my shaking hands with you for the present, Doctor," said E——, looking at me through a huge pair of tortoise-shell spectacles, "for both hands are engaged, you see. My friend, Dr ——, has just sent me a piece of platina, and you see I'm already playing pranks with it! Really, I'm as eager to spoil a plaything, to see what my rattle's made of, as any philosophical child in the kingdom! Here I am analysing, dissolving, transmuting, and so on. But I've really an important end in view here, trying a new combination of metal, and Dr —— is anxious to know if the result of my process corresponds with *his*.—Now, now, Joseph," said E——, breaking off suddenly, "it is ready; bring the"—— At this critical instant, by some unlucky accident, poor Joseph suddenly overthrew the whole apparatus—and the compounds, ashes, fragments, &c., were spilled on the floor! Really I quite lost my own temper with thinking of the vexatious disappointment it would be to E——. Not so, however, with him.

"Oh, dear—dear, dear me! Well, here's an end of our day's work before we thought for it! How did you do it, Joseph, eh?" said E——, with an air of chagrin, but with perfect mildness of tone. What a ludicrous contrast between the philosopher and his assistant! The latter, an obese little fellow, with a droll cast of one eye, was quite red in the face, and, wringing his hands, exclaimed—"O Lord—O Lord—O Lord! what *could* I have been doing, master?"

"Why, that's surely *your* concern more than mine," replied E——, smiling at me. "Come, come, it can't be helped—you've done yourself more harm than me—by giving Dr —— such a specimen of your awkwardness as *I* have not seen for many a month. See and set things to rights as soon as possible," said E——, calmly putting away his spectacles.

"Well, Dr ——, what do you think of my little workshop?" he continued, addressing me, who still stood with my hat and gloves on—surprised and delighted to see that his temper had stood this trial, and that such a provoking *contre-temps* had really not at all ruffled him. From the position in which he stood, the light fell strongly on his face, and I saw his features more distinctly than heretofore. I noticed that sure index of a thinking countenance—three strong perpendicular marks, or folds, between the eyebrows, at right angles with the deep wrinkles that furrowed his forehead, and then the "untroubled lustre" of his cold, clear, full, blue eyes, rich and serene as that

—— through whose clear medium the great sun
Loveth to shoot his beams, all bright'ning, all
Turning to gold.

Reader, when you see a face of this stamp, so marked, and with such eyes and forehead, rest assured you are looking at a gifted, if not an extraordinary man.

The lower features were somewhat shrunk and sallow, as well they might, if only from a thousand hours of agony, setting aside the constant wearing of his "ever-waking mind;" yet a smile of cheerfulness, call it rather resignation, irradiated his pale countenance, like twilight on a sepulchre. He showed me round his laboratory, which was kept in most exemplary cleanliness and order; and then, opening a door, we entered the "sanctum sanctorum"—his study. It had not more, I should think, than five or six hundred books; but all of them—in plain substantial bindings—had manifestly seen good

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service. Immediately beneath the window stood several portions of a splendid astronomical apparatus—a very large telescope, in exquisite order—a recently invented instrument for calculating the parallaxes of the fixed stars—a chronometer of his own construction, &c. "Do you see this piece of furniture?" he inquired, directing my attention to a sort of sideless sofa, or broad inclined plane, stuffed, the extremity turned up, to rest the feet against—and being at an angle of about forty-five degrees with the floor. "Ah! could that thing speak, it might tell a tale of my tortures, such as no living being may! For, when I feel my daily paroxysms coming on me, if I am anywhere near my study, I lay my wearied limbs here, and continue till I find relief!" This put conversation into the very train I wished. I begged him to favour me with a description of his disease; and he sat down and complied. I recollect him comparing the pain to that which might be supposed to follow the incessant stinging of a wasp at the spinal marrow—sudden lancinating, accompanied by quivering sensations throughout the whole nervous system—followed by a strange sense of numbness. He said that at other times it was as though some one were in the act of drilling a hole through his back-bone, and piercing the marrow! Sometimes, during the moments of his most ecstatic agonies, he felt as though his back-bone were rent asunder all the way up. The pain was, on the whole, *local*—confined to the first of the lumbar vertebræ; but occasionally fluctuating between them and the dorsal.

When he had finished the dreary details of his disease, I was obliged to acknowledge, with a sigh, that nothing suggested itself to me as a remedy, but what I understood from Dr D—— had been tried over and over, and over again. "You are right," he replied sorrowfully. "Dreadful as are my sufferings, the bare thought of undergoing more medical or surgical treatment makes me shudder. My back is already frightfully disfigured with the searings of caustic, seton-marks, cupping, and blistering; and I hope God will give me patience to wait till these perpetual knockings, as it were, shall have at length battered down this frail structure."

"Mr E——, you rival some of the old martyrs!" I faltered, grasping his hand as we rose to leave the study.

"In point of bodily suffering, I may; but their *holiness!* Those who are put into the keenest parts—the very heart of the 'fiery furnace'—will come out most refined at last!"

"Well, you may be earning a glorious reward hereafter, for your constancy"——

"Or I may be merely smarting for the sins of my forefathers!" exclaimed E—— mournfully.

*Monday, July* 18—. Having been summoned to a patient in the neighbourhood of E——, I took that opportunity of calling upon him on my return. It was about nine o'clock in the evening, and I found the philosopher sitting pensively in the parlour alone; for his niece, I learned, had retired early, owing to indisposition. A peculiar sinumbra lamp, of his own contrivance, stood on the table, which was strewn with books, pamphlets, and papers. He received me with his usual gentle affability.

"I don't know how it is, but I feel in a singular mood of mind to-night," said he: "I ought to say rather *many* moods: sometimes so suddenly and strongly excited as to lose the control over my emotions—at others sinking into the depths of despondency. I've been trying for these two hours to glance over this 'New View of the Neptunian Theory,'" pointing to an open book on the table, "which —— has sent me, to review for him in the ——; but 'tis useless; I cannot command my thoughts." I felt his pulse: it was one of the most irregular I had ever known. "I know what you suspect," said he, observing my eyes fixed with a puzzled air on my watch, and my finger at his wrist, for several minutes; "some organic mischief at the heart. Several of your fraternity have latterly comforted me with assurances to that

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effect." I assured him I did not apprehend anything of the kind, but merely that his circulation was a little disturbed by recent excitement.

"True—true," he replied, "I *am* a little flustered, as the phrase is"——

"Oh!—here's the secret, I suppose?" said I, reaching to a periodical publication of the month lying on the table, and in which I had, a few days ago, read a somewhat virulent attack on him. "You're very rudely handled here, I think?" said I.

"What! do you think *that* has discomposed me?" he inquired with a smile. "No, no—I'm past feeling these things long ago! Abuse—mere personality—now excites in me no emotion of any kind!"

"Why, Mr E——, surely you are not indifferent to the opinion of the public, which may be misled by such things as these, if suffered to go unanswered?"

"I am not afraid of that. If I've done anything good in my time, as I have honestly tried to do, sensible people won't believe me an impostor, at any man's bidding. Those who *would* be so influenced, are hardly worth undeceiving."*

* * "There's a good deal of acuteness in the paper; and, in one particular, the reviewer has fairly caught me tripping. He may *laugh* at me as much as he pleases; but why go about to put himself in a passion? The subject did not require it. But if he is in a passion, should I not be foolish to be in one too?—Passion serves only to put out truth; and no one would indulge it that had truth only in view. * * The real occasion of my nervousness," he continued, "is far different from what you have supposed—a little incident which occurred only this evening; and I will tell it you.

"My niece, feeling poorly with a cold, retired to bed as soon as she had done tea; and, after sitting here about a quarter of an hour, I took one of the candles, and walked to the laboratory, to see whether all was right—as is my custom every evening. On opening the door, to my very great amazement, I saw a stranger in it; a gentleman in dark-coloured clothes, holding a dim taper in one hand, and engaged in going round the room, apparently putting all my instruments in order. I stood at the door almost petrified, watching his movements without thinking of interrupting them, for a sudden feeling of something like awe crept over me. He made no noise whatever, and did not seem aware that any one was looking at him—or if he was, he did not seem disposed to notice the interruption. I saw him as clearly, and what he was doing, as I now see you playing with your gloves! he was engaged leisurely putting away all my loose implements: shutting boxes, cases, and cupboards, with the accuracy of one who was perfectly well acquainted with his work. Having thus disposed of all the instruments and apparatus which had been used to-day—and we have had very many more than usual out—he opened the inner door leading to the study, and entered—I following in mute astonishment. He went to work the same way in the study; shutting up several volumes that lay open on the table, and carefully replacing them in their proper places on the shelves.

"Having cleared away these, he approached the astronomical apparatus near the window, put the cap on the object-end of the telescope, pushed in the joints all noiselessly, closed up in its case my new chronometer, and then returned to the table where my desk lay, took up the inkstand, poured out the ink into the fireplace, flung all the pens under the grate, and then shut the desk, locked it, and laid the

* "This gentleman's speculations have long served to amuse children and old people: now that he has become old himself, he also may hope for amusement from them."—"This mountain has so long brought forth mice, that, now it has become enfeebled and worn out, it may amuse itself with looking after its progeny."—"Chimeras of a diseased brain."—"Quackery."—— *Review*,† [neither the Edinburgh nor Quarterly.] *Mr E—— knew who was the writer of this article.*

† The French Translator volunteers to assign in a note, "Le New Monthly Magazine," as the one alluded to, and from which these quotations are made, though I distinctly stated it to be one of the Reviews.

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key on the top of it. When he had done all this, he walked towards the wall, and turned slowly towards me, looked me full in the face, and shook his head mournfully. The taper he held in his hand slowly expired; and the spectre, if such it were, disappeared. The strangest part of the story is yet to follow. The pale, fixed features seemed perfectly *familiar* to me—they were those which I had often gazed at, in a portrait of Mr Boyle, prefixed to my quarto copy of his *Treatise of Atmospheric Air*. As soon as I had a little recovered my self-possession, I took down the work in question, and examined the portrait. I was right!—I cannot account for my not having spoken to the figure, or gone close up to it. I think I could have done either, as far as *courage* went. My prevailing idea was, that a single word would have dissolved the charm, and my curiosity prompted me to see it out. I returned to the parlour, and rang the bell for Joseph.

"'Joseph,' said I, 'have you set things to rights in the laboratory and study to-night?'—'Yes, master,' he replied, with surprise in his manner; 'I finished it before tea-time, and set things in *particular* good order; I gave both the rooms a right good cleaning out; I'm sure there's not a very pin in its wrong place."

"'What made you fling the pens and ink in the fireplace and under the grate?'

"'Because I thought they were of no use—the pens worn to stumps, and the ink thick and clotted—too much *gum* in it.' He was evidently astonished at being asked such questions, and was going to explain further, when I said simply, 'That will do,' and he retired. Now, what am I to think of all this? If it were a mere ocular spectrum, clothed with its functions from my own excited fancy, there was yet a unity of purpose in its doings that is extraordinary! Something very much like '*shutting up the shop*'—eh?" inquired E—— with a melancholy smile.

"'Tis touching—very! I never heard of a more singular incident," I replied abstractedly, without removing my eyes from the fire; for *my* reading of the occurrence was a sudden and strong conviction, that, ghost or no ghost, E—— had toiled his *last* in the behalf of science—that he would never again have occasion to use his philosophical machinery! This melancholy presentiment invested E——, and all he said or did, with tenfold interest in my eyes. "Don't suppose, doctor, that I am weak enough to be seriously disturbed by the occurrence I have just been mentioning. Whether or not it really portends my approaching death, I know not. Though I am not presumptuous enough to suppose myself so important as to warrant any special interference of Providence on my behalf, yet I cannot help thinking I am to look on this as a warning—a solemn premonition—that I may 'set my house in order, and die.'" Our conversation, during the remainder of our interview, turned on the topic suggested by the affecting incident just related. I listened to all he uttered as to the words of a doomed—a dying man! What E—— advanced on this difficult and interesting subject, was marked not less by sound philosophy than unfeigned piety. He ended with avowing his belief, that the Omnipotent Being, who formed both the body and the soul, and willed them to exist unitedly, could surely, nevertheless, if he saw good, cause the one to exist separately from the other; either by endowing it with *new properties* for that special purpose, or by enabling it to exercise, in its disembodied state, those powers which continued *latent* in it during its connection with the body. Did it follow, he asked, that neither body nor soul possessed any *other qualities* than those which were necessary to enable them to exist together? Why should the soul be incapable of a substantially distinct personal existence? Where the *impossibility* of its being made visible to organs of sense? Has the Almighty no means of bringing this to pass? Are there no latent properties in the organs of vision—no subtle *sympathies* with immaterial substances—which are yet undiscovered,

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and even undiscoverable? Surely this *may* be the case—though *how*, it would be impossible to conjecture. He saw no bad philosophy, he said, in this; and he who decided the question in the negative, before he had brought forward some evidence of its moral or physical *impossibility*, was guilty of most presumptuous dogmatism.

This is the substance of his opinions; but, alas! I lack the chaste, nervous, philosophical eloquence in which they were clothed. A distinguished living character said of E——, that he was the most fascinating talker on abstruse subjects he ever heard. I could have stayed all night listening to him. In fact, I fear I *did* trespass on his politeness even to inconvenience. I stayed and partook of his supper—simple frugal fare—consisting of roast potatoes and two tumblers of new milk. I left about eleven; my mind occupied but with one wish all the way home—that I had known E—— intimately for as many *years* as hours!

Two days afterwards, the following hurried note was put into my hands from my friend Dr D——: "My dear ——, I am sure you will be as much afflicted as I was, at hearing that our inestimable friend, Mr E——, had a sudden stroke of the palsy this afternoon about two o'clock, from which I very much fear he may never recover; for this, added to his advanced age, and the dreadful chronic complaint under which he labours, is surely sufficient to shatter the small remains of his strength. I need hardly say that all is in confusion at ——. I am going down there to-night, and shall be happy to drive you down also, if you will be at my house by seven. Yours, &c."—I was grieved and agitated, but in nowise surprised at this intelligence. What passed the last time I saw him, prepared me for something of this kind.

On arriving in the evening, we were shown into the parlour, where sat Miss E——, in a paroxysm of hysterical weeping, which had forced her, a few moments before, to leave her uncle's sick-room. It was some time before we could calm her agitated spirits, or get her to give us anything like a connected account of her uncle's sudden illness. "Oh, these will tell you all!" said she sobbing, and taking two letters from her bosom, one of which bore a black seal; "it is these cruel letters that have broken his heart! Both came by the same post this morning!" She withdrew, promising to send for us when all was ready, and we hastily opened the two letters she had left. What will the reader suppose were the two heavy strokes dealt at once upon the head of Mr E—— by an inscrutable Providence? The letter I opened conveyed the intelligence of the sudden death, in childbed, of Mrs ——, his only daughter, to whom he had been most passionately attached. The letter Dr D—— held in his hand, disclosed an instance of almost unparalleled perfidy and ingratitude. I shall here state what I learned afterwards: that, many years ago, Mr E—— had taken a poor lad from one of the parish schools,* pleased with his quickness and obedience, and had apprenticed him to a respectable tradesman. He served his articles honourably, and Mr E—— nobly advanced him funds to establish himself in business. He prospered beyond every one's expectations; and the good, generous, confiding E——, was so delighted with his conduct, and persuaded of his principles, that he gradually advanced him large sums of money to increase an extensive connection; and at last invested his *all*, amounting to little short of £15,000, in this man's concern, for which he received five per cent. Sudden success, however, turned this young man's head; and Mr E—— had long been uneasy at hearing current rumours about his *protegé's* unsteadiness and extravagance. He had several times spoken to him about them; but was easily persuaded that the reports in question were as groundless as ma-

* "Enfans trouvés, enfans de pauvres. On peut se charger d'eux en payant une somme à la paroisse qui vous le livre. Cette coutume a dégénéré d'une manière horrible, et, dans certains cantons d'Angleterre, elle est devenue un véritable marché de chair humaine."—*Note of the French Translator.*

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lignant. And as the last half-year's interest was paid punctually, accompanied with a hint, that if doubts were entertained of his probity, the man was ready to refund a great part of the *principal*, Mr E——'s confidence revived. Now, the letter in question was from this person, and stated that, though "circumstances" had compelled him to withdraw from his creditors for the present—in other words, to abscond—he had no doubt that, if Mr E—— would wait a little, he should in time be able to pay him "a fair dividend!"

"Good God! why, E—— is *ruined!*" exclaimed Dr D——, turning pale, and dropping the letter, after having read it to me. "Yes, ruined!—all the hard savings of many years' labour and economy, *gone* at a stroke!"

"Why, was *all* his small fortune embarked in this man's concern?"

"All, except a few hundreds lying loose at his banker's!—What is to become of poor Miss E——?"

"Cannot this infamous scoundrel be brought to justice?" I inquired.

"If he were, he may prove, perhaps, not worth powder and shot, the viper!"

Similar emotions kept us both silent for several moments.

"This will put his philosophy to a dreadful trial," said I. "How do you think he will bear it, should he recover from the present seizure so far as to be made sensible of the extent of his misfortunes?"

"Oh, nobly, nobly! I'll pledge my existence to it! He'll bear it like a Christian as well as a philosopher! I've seen him in trouble before this."

"Is Miss E—— entirely dependent on her uncle; and has he made no provision for her?"

"Alas, he had appropriated to her £5000 of the £15,000 in this man's hands, as a marriage portion—I know it, for I am one of his executors. The circumstance of leaving her thus destitute will, I know, prey cruelly on his mind."—Shortly afterwards, we were summoned into the chamber of the venerable sufferer. His niece sat at the bedside, near his head, holding one of his cold motionless hands in hers. Mr E——'s face, deadly pale, and damp with perspiration, had suffered a shocking distortion of the features—the left eye and the mouth being drawn downwards to the left side. He gazed at us vacantly, evidently without recognising us, as we took our stations, one at the foot, the other at the side of the bed. What a melancholy contrast between the present expression of his eyes and that of acuteness and brilliance which eminently characterised them in health! They reminded me of Milton's sun, looking

> "——through the horizontal misty air,
> Shorn of its beams."

The distorted lips were moving about incessantly, as though with abortive efforts to speak, though he could utter nothing but an inarticulate murmuring sound, which he had continued almost from the moment of his being struck. Was it not a piteous, a heart-rending spectacle? Was *this* the PHILOSOPHER!

After making due inquiries, and ascertaining the extent of the injury to his nervous system, we withdrew to consult on the treatment to be adopted. I considered that the uncommon quantities of laudanum he had so long been in the habit of receiving into his system, alone sufficiently accounted for his present seizure. Then, again, the disease in his spine—the consequent exhaustion of his energies—the sedentary, thoughtful life he led—all these were at least predisposing causes. The sudden shock he had received in the morning, merely *accelerated* what had long been advancing on him. We both anticipated a speedy fatal issue, and resolved to take the earliest opportunity of acquainting him with his approaching end.

[He lies in nearly the same state during Thursday and Friday.]

*Saturday.*—We are both astonished and delighted to find that E——'s daily paroxysms have deserted him, at least he has exhibited no symptoms of their appearance up to this day. On entering the room, we found, to our inexpressible satisfaction, that his disorder had taken a very unusual and happy

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course—having been worked out of the system by *fever*. This, as my medical readers will be aware, is a very rare occurrence.—[Three or four pages of the Diary are occupied with technical details, of no interest whatever to the general reader.]—His features were soon restored to their natural position, and, in short, every appearance of palsy left him.

*Sunday evening.*—Mr. E—— going on well, and his mental energies and speech perfectly restored. I called on him alone. Almost his first words to me were, "Well, doctor, good Mr Boyle was right, you see?" I replied, that it yet remained to be proved.

"God sent me a noble messenger to summon me hence, did he not? One whose character has always been my model, as far as I could imitate his great and good qualities."

"You attach too much weight, Mr E——, to that creature of imagination."

"What! do you really doubt that I am on my deathbed? I assuredly shall not recover. The pains in my back have left me, that my end may be easy. Ay, ay, the 'silver cord is loosed.'" I inquired about the sudden cessation of his chronic complaint. He said it had totally disappeared, leaving behind it only a sensation of numbness. "In this instance of His mercy towards an unworthy worm of the earth, I devoutly thank my Father—my God!" he exclaimed, looking reverentially upward. —"Oh, how could I in patience have possessed my soul, if to the pains of dying had been superadded those which have embittered life! My constant prayer to God has been, that, if it be His will, my life may run out clear to the last drop; and though the stream has been a little troubled"—alluding to the intelligence which had occasioned his illness—"I may yet have my prayer answered. Oh, sweet darling Anne! why should I grieve for *you*? Where I am going, I humbly believe you are! Root and branch—both gathered home!" He shed tears abundantly, but spoke of the dreadful bereavement in terms of perfect resignation. * * * "You are, no doubt, acquainted," he continued, "with the other afflicting news, which, I own, has cut me to the quick! My confidence has been betrayed—my sweet niece's prospects utterly blighted, and I made a beggar of in my old age. This ungrateful man has squandered away infamously the careful savings of more than thirty years—every penny of which has been earned with the sweat of my brow. I do not so much care for it myself, as I have still enough left to preserve me from want during the few remaining days I have left me; but my poor dear Emma! My heart aches to think of it!"

"I hope you may yet recover *some* portion of your property, Mr E——; the man speaks in his letter of paying you a fair dividend."

"No, no—when once a man has deliberately acted in such an unprincipled manner as he has, it is foolish to expect restitution. Loss of character and the confidence of his benefactor makes him desperate. I find that, should I linger on earth longer than a few weeks, I cannot now afford to pay the rent of this house—I must remove from it—I cannot die in the house in which my poor wife breathed her last—this very room!" His tears burst forth again, and mine started to my eyes. "A friend is now looking out lodgings for me in the neighbourhood, to which I shall remove the instant my health will permit. It goes to my heart, to think of the bustling auctioneer disposing of all my apparatus"—tears again gushed from his eyes—"the companions of many years"——

"Dear, dear sir!—Your friends will ransack heaven and earth before your fears shall be verified," said I, with emotion.

"They—you—are very good—but you would be unsuccessful!—You must think me very weak to let these things overcome me in this way—one can't help feeling them!—A man may writhe under the amputating knife, and yet acknowledge the necessity of its use! My spirit wants disciplining."

"Allow me to say, Mr E——, that

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I think you bear your misfortunes with admirable fortitude—true philosophic"——

"Oh, doctor! doctor!" he exclaimed, interrupting me with solemn emphasis—"believe a dying man, to whom all this world's fancied realities have sunk into shadows—*nothing* can make a deathbed easy, but RELIGION—a humble, hearty faith in Him, whose Son redeemed mankind! Philosophy—science—is a nothing—a mockery—a delusion—if it be only of this world! I believe from the bottom of my heart, and have long done so, that the essence—the very crown and glory of true philosophy, is to surrender up the soul entirely to God's teaching, and practically receive and appreciate the consolations of the gospel of Jesus Christ!" Oh, the fervency with which he expressed himself—his shrunk clasped hands pointed upwards, and his features beaming with devotion! I told him it did my heart good to hear such opinions avowed by a man of his distinguished attainments.

"Don't—don't—don't talk in that strain, doctor!" said he, turning to me with a reproving air. "Could a living man but know how compliments pall upon a dying man's ear! * * * I am going shortly into the presence of Him who is Wisdom itself; and shall I go pluming myself on my infinitely less than glow-worm glimmer, into the presence of that pure Effulgence? Doctor, I've felt, latterly, that I would give worlds to forget the pitiful acquirements which I have purchased by a life's labour, if my soul might meet a smile of approbation when it first flits into the presence of its Maker—its Judge!" Strange language! thought I, for the scientific E——, confessedly a master-mind among men! Would that the shoal of sciolists, now babbling abroad their infidel crudities, could have had one moment's interview with this dying philosopher! Pert fools, who are hardly released from their leading-strings—the very go-cart, as it were, of elemental science—before they strut about, and forthwith proceed to pluck their MAKER by the beard—and this, as an evidence of their "independence," and being released from the "trammels of superstition!"

O Lord and Maker of the universe!—That thou shouldst be so "long-suffering" towards these insolent insects of an hour!

To return: I left E—— in a glowing mood of mind, disposed to envy him his deathbed, even with all the ills which attended it! Before leaving the house I stepped into the parlour to speak a few words to Miss E——. The sudden illness of her uncle had found its way into the papers; and I was delighted to find it had brought a profusion of cards every morning, many of them bearing the most distinguished names in rank and science. It showed that E——'s worth was properly appreciated. I counted the cards of five noblemen, and very many members of the Royal, and other learned Societies.

*Wednesday, 15th August.*—Well, poor E—— was yesterday removed from his house in —— Row, where he had resided upwards of twenty-five years—which he had fitted up, working often with his own hands, at much trouble and expense—having built the laboratory-room since he had the house: he was removed, I say, from his house, to lodgings in the neighbourhood. He has three rooms on the first floor, small, indeed, and in humble style—but perfectly clean, neat, and comfortable. Was not this itself sufficient to have broken many a haughty spirit? His extensive philosophical apparatus, furniture, &c., had *all been sold*, at less than a *twentieth* part of the sum they had originally cost him! No tidings as yet have been received of the villain who has ruined his generous patron. E—— has ceased, however, to talk of it; but I see that Miss E—— feels it acutely. Poor girl, well she may! Her uncle was carried in a sedan to his new residence, and fainted on the way, but has continued in tolerable spirits since his arrival. His conduct is the admiration of all that see or hear of him! The first words he uttered, as he was

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sitting before the fire in an easy-chair, after recovering a little from the exhaustion occasioned by his being carried up-stairs, were to Dr D——, who had accompanied him. "Well!" he whispered faintly, with his eyes shut —"What a gradation!—Reached the *halfway-house* between —— Row and the 'house appointed for all living!'"

"You have much to bear, sir!" said Dr D——. "And more to be thankful for!" replied E——. "If there was such a thing as a Protestant *Calendar*," said Dr D—— to me enthusiastically, while recounting what is told above, "and I could canonise, E—— should stand first on the list, and be my patron saint!" When I saw E——, he was lying in bed, in a very low and weak state, evidently declining rapidly. Still he looked as placid as his fallen features would let him.

"Doctor," said he, soon after I had sat down, "how very good it is of you to come so far out of your regular route to see me!"

"Don't name it," said I; "proud and happy"——

"But, excuse me, I wish to tell you that, when I am gone, you will find I knew how to be grateful, as far as my means would warrant."

"Mr E——! my dear sir!" said I, as firmly as my emotions could let me, "if you don't promise, this day, to erase every mention of my name or services from your will, I leave you, and solemnly declare I will never intrude upon you again! Mr E——, you distress me—you do—beyond measure!"

"Well—well—well—I'll obey you —but may God bless you! God bless you!" he replied, turning his head away, while the tears trickled down. Indeed! as if a thousand guineas could have purchased the emotions with which I felt his poor damp fingers feebly compressing my hand!

* * * *

"Doctor!" he exclaimed, after I had been sitting with him some time, conversing on various subjects connected with his illness and worldly circumstances—"don't you think God can speak to the soul as well in a night as a day dream? Shall I presume to say he has done so in my case?" I asked him what he was alluding to.

"Don't you recollect my telling you of an optical, or spectral illusion, which occurred to me at —— Row? A man shutting up the shop—you know?" I told him I did.

"Well—last night I *dreamed*—I am satisfied it was a dream—that I saw Mr Boyle again; but how different! Instead of gloomy clothing, his appearance was wondrously radiant; and his features were not, as before, solemn, sad, and fixed, but wore an air of joy and exultation; and, instead of a miserable expiring taper, he held aloft a light like the kindling lustre of a star! What think you of that, doctor? Surely, if both these are the delusions of a morbid fancy—*if* they are, what a light they fling over the 'dark valley' I am entering!"

I hinted my dissent from the sceptical sneers of the day, which would resolve all that was uttered on death-beds into delirious rant, confused disordered faculties—superstition.

"I think you are right," said he. "Who knows what new light may stream upon the soul, as the wall between time and eternity is breaking down? Who has come back from the grave to tell us that the soul's energies decay with the body, or that the body's decay destroys or interrupts the exercise of the soul's powers, and that all a dying man utters is mere gibberish? The *Christian* philosopher would be loath to do so, when he recollects that God chose *the hour of death* to reveal futurity to the patriarchs, and others, of old! Do you think a superintending Providence would allow the most solemn and instructive period of our life, the close —scenes where men's hearts and eyes are open, if ever, to receive admonition and encouragement—to be mere exhibitions of absurdity and weakness? Is that the way God treats his servants?"

*Friday afternoon.*—In a more mel-

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ancholy mood than usual, on account of the evident distress of his niece about her altered prospects. He told me, however, that he felt the confidence of his soul in no wise shaken. "I am," said he, "like one lying far on the shores of eternity, thrown there by the waters of the world, and whom a high and strong wave reaches once more and overflows. One may be pardoned a sudden chillness and heart-fluttering. After all," he continued, "only consider what an easy end mine is, comparatively with that of many others! How very—very thankful should I be for such an easy exit as mine seems likely to be! God be thanked that I have to endure no such agonies of horror and remorse as ——!" (alluding to Mr ——, whom I was then attending, and whose case I had mentioned on a former occasion to Mr E——, the one described in a former part of this Diary, under the title—*A Man about Town*)—"that I am writhing under no accident—that I have not to struggle with utter destitution! Why am I not left to perish in a prison?—to suffer on a scaffold?—to be plucked suddenly into the presence of my Maker in battle,* 'with all my sins upon my head?' Suppose I were grovelling in the hopeless darkness of scepticism or infidelity? Suppose I were still to endure the agonies arising from disease in my spine?—O God!" exclaimed Mr E——, "give me a more humble and grateful heart!"

*Monday, 19th September.*—Mr E—— is still alive, to the equal astonishment of Dr D—— and myself. The secret must lie, I think, in his tranquil frame of mind. He is as happy as the day is long! Oh! that my latter days may be like his! I was listening, with feelings of delight unutterable, to E——'s description of the state of his mind—the perfect peace he felt towards all mankind, and his humble and strong hopes of happiness hereafter—when the landlady of the house knocked at the door, and, on entering, told Mr E—— that a person was down stairs very anxious to see him. "Who is it?" inquired E——. She did not know. "Has he ever been here before?" "No;" but she thought she had several times seen him about the neighbourhood.—"What sort of a person is he?" inquired E——, with a surprised air.—"Oh, he is a tall pale man, in a brown greatcoat." E—— requested her to go down and ask his name. She returned and said, "Mr H——, sir." E——, on hearing her utter the word, suddenly raised himself in bed; the little colour he had fled from his cheeks: he lifted up his hands and exclaimed—"What can the unhappy man want with me?" He paused thoughtfully for a few moments. "You're, of course, aware who this is?" he inquired of me in a whisper. I nodded. "Show him up-stairs," said he; and the woman withdrew. I helped hastily to remove him from his bed to an arm-chair near the fire. "For your own sake," said I hurriedly, "I beg you to be calm; don't allow your feelings"——I was interrupted by the door opening, and just such a person as Mrs —— had described entered, with a slow hesitating step, into the room. He held his hat squeezed in both his hands, and he stood for a few moments motionless, just within the door, with his eyes fixed on the floor. In that posture he continued till Mrs —— had retired, shutting the door after her, when he turned suddenly towards the easy-chair by the fire, in which Mr E—— was sitting, much agitated—approached, and, falling down on his knees, covered his eyes with his hands, through which the tears presently fell like rain; and, after many sobs and sighs, he faltered, "Oh, Mr E——!"

"What do you want with ME, Mr H——?" inquired Mr E——, in a low tone, but very calmly.

"Oh! kind, good, abused sir! I have behaved like a villain to you"——

"Mr H——, I beg you will not distress me; consider I am in a very poor and weak state."

* This was at the time of the Peninsular Campaign.

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"Don't, for God's sake, speak so coldly, sir. I am heart-broken to think how shamefully I have used you!"

"Well, then, strive to amend"——

"Oh, dear, good Mr E——! can you forgive me?" Mr E—— did not answer. I saw he *could* not. The tears were nearly overflowing. The man seized his hand, and pressed it to his lips with fervency.

"Rise, Mr H——, rise! I *do* forgive you, and I hope that God will! Seek His forgiveness, which will avail you more than *mine!*"

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed the man, again covering his eyes with his hands—"How very—VERY ill you look—how pale and thin!—It's *I* that have done it all—I, the d——dest"——

"Hush, hush, sir!" exclaimed Mr E——, with more sternness than I had ever seen him exhibit, "do not curse in a dying man's room."

"Dying—dying—*dying*, sir!" exclaimed the man hoarsely, staring horror-struck at Mr E——, and retiring a step from him.

"Yes, James," replied E—— mildly, calling him for the first time by his Christian name, "I am assuredly dying—but not through *you*, or anything you have done. Come, come, don't distress yourself unnecessarily," he continued in the kindest tones; for he saw the man continued deadly pale, speechless, and clasping his hands convulsively over his breast—"Consider, James, the death of my daughter, Mrs ——."

"Oh no, no, no, sir—no! It's I that have done it all; my ingratitude has broken your heart—I know it has!—What will become of me?"—the man resumed, still staring vacantly at Mr E——.

"James, I must not be agitated in this way—it destroys me—you must leave the room, unless you can become calm. What is done, *is* done; and if you really repent of it"——

"Oh! I do sir; and could almost weep tears of blood for it! But indeed, sir, it has been as much my misfortune as my fault."

"Was it your *misfortune*, or your fault, that you kept that infamous woman, on whom you have squandered so much of your property—of *mine* rather?" inquired Mr E——, with a mild, expostulating air. The man suddenly blushed scarlet, and continued silent.

"It is right I should tell you that it is *your* misconduct which has turned me out, in my old age, from the house which has sheltered me all my life, and driven me to die in this poor place! You have beggared my niece, and robbed me of all the hard earnings of my life—wrung from the sweat of my brow, as you well know, James. How could your heart let you do all this?" The man made him no answer. "I am not *angry* with you—that is past; but I am grieved—disappointed—shocked—to find my confidence in you has been so much abused."

"Oh, sir! I don't know what it was that infatuated me: but—never trust a living man again, sir—never," replied the man vehemently.

"It is not likely that I shall, James—I shall not have the opportunity," said Mr E—— calmly. The man's eye continued fixed on Mr E——, his lip quivered in spite of his violent compression, and the fluctuating colour in his cheeks showed the agitation he was suffering.

"Do you forgive me, sir, for what I have done?" he asked, almost inaudibly.

"Yes—if you promise to amend—yes! Here is my hand—I DO forgive you, as I hope for my own forgiveness hereafter!" said Mr E——, reaching out his hand. "And if your repentance is sincere, remember, should it ever be in your power, whom you have most heavily wronged—not *me*, but—but—Miss E——, my poor niece. If you *should* ever be able to make her any reparation"——the tears stood in Mr E——'s eyes, and his emotions prevented his completing the sentence. "Really, you *must* leave me, James—you must—I am too weak to bear this scene any longer," said E—— faintly, looking deadly pale.

"You had better withdraw, sir, and



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call some other time," said I. He rose, looking almost bewildered; thrust his hand into his breast-pocket, and taking out a small packet, laid it hurriedly on Mr E——'s lap—snatched his hand to his lips, and murmuring, "Farewell, farewell, best—most injured of men!" withdrew. I watched him through the window; and saw that, as soon as he had left the house, he set off, running almost at the top of his speed. When I returned to look at Mr E——, he had fainted. He had opened the packet, and a letter lay open in his lap, with a great many bank-notes. The letter ran as follows: "Injured and revered sir,*—When you read this epistle, the miserable writer will have fled from his country, and be on his way to America. He has abused the confidence of one of the greatest and best of men, but hopes the enclosed sum will show he repented what he had done! If it is ever in his power, he will do more. J—— H——." The packet contained bank-notes to the amount of £3000. When E—— had recovered from his swoon, I had him conveyed to bed, where he lay in a state of great exhaustion. He scarcely spoke a syllable during the time I continued with him.

*Tuesday.*—Mr E—— still suffers from the effects of yesterday's excitement. It has, I am confident, hurried him far on his journey to the grave. He told me he had been turning over the affair in his mind, and considered that it would be wrong in him to retain the £3000, as it would be illegal, and a fraud on H——'s other creditors; and this upright man had actually sent in the morning for the solicitor to the bankrupt's assignees, and put the whole into his hands, telling him of the circumstances under which he had received it, and asking him whether he should not be wrong in keeping it. The lawyer told him that he might perhaps be legally, but not morally wrong, as the law certainly forbade such payments; and yet he was by very far the largest creditor. "Let me act rightly, then," said Mr E——, "in the sight of God and man! Take the money, and let me come in with the rest of the creditors." Mr —— withdrew. He must have seen but seldom such an instance of noble conscientiousness! I remonstrated with Mr E——. "No, no, doctor," he replied; "I have endeavoured strictly to do my duty during life—I will not begin roguery on my deathbed!"

"Possibly you may not receive a penny in the pound, Mr E——," said I.

"But I shall have the comfort of quitting life with a clear conscience!"

* * * *

*Monday*—(a week afterwards.)—The "weary wheels of life" will soon "stand still!" All is calm and serene with E—— as a summer evening's sunset! He is at peace with all the world, and with his God. It is like entering the porch of heaven, and listening to an angel, to visit and converse with E——. This morning he received the reward of his noble conduct in the matter of H——'s bankruptcy. The assignees have wound up the affairs, and found them not nearly so desperate as had been apprehended. The business was still to be carried on in H——'s name; and the solicitor, who had been sent for by E—— to receive the £3000 in behalf of the assignees, called this morning with a cheque for £3500, and a highly complimentary letter from the assignees. They informed him that there was every prospect of the concern's yet discharging the heavy amount of his claim, and that they would see to its being paid to whomsoever he might appoint. H—— had set sail for America the very day he had called on E——, and had left word that he should never return. E—— altered his will this evening in the presence of myself and Dr D——. He left about £4000 to his niece, "and whatever sums might be from time to time paid in from H——'s business;" five guineas for a yearly prize to the writer

* "Vous que je vénère et que j'ai tant outragé"—says the French Translator; adding, in an amusing note—"*Revered and much injured sir.* Cette expression pathetique et simple n'a point de corrélatif en Français.—*Révéré et très-offensé monsieur,*" *&c.*

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of the best summary of the progress of philosophy every year, in one of the Scotch colleges; and ten pounds to be delivered every Christmas to ten poor men, as long as they lived, and who had already received the gratuity for several years; "and to J—— H——, my full and hearty forgiveness, and prayers to God that he may return to a course of virtue and true piety, before it is too late." * * "How is it," said he, "addressing Dr D—— and me, "that you have neither of you said anything to me about examining my body after my decease?" Dr D—— replied, that he had often thought of asking his permission, but had kept delaying from day to day. "Why?" inquired E——, with a smile of surprise, "do you fancy I have any silly fears or prejudices on the subject—that I am anxious about the shell when the kernel is gone? I can assure you that it would rather give me pleasure than otherwise to think that, by an examination of my body, the cause of medical science might be advanced, and so I might minister a little to my species. I must, however, say you NAY; for I promised my poor wife that I would forbid it. *She* had prejudices, and I have a right to respect them."

*Wednesday.*—He looked much reduced this evening. I had hurried to his lodgings, to communicate what I considered would be the gratifying intelligence, that the highest prize of a foreign learned society had just been awarded him, for his work on ——, together with a fellowship. My hurried manner somewhat discomposed him; and before I had communicated my news, he asked, with some agitation, "What!—Some new misfortune?" When I had told him my errand—"Oh, bubble! bubble! bubble!" he exclaimed, shaking his head with a melancholy smile; "would I not give a thousand of these for a poor man's blessing? Are these, *these*, the trifles men toil through a life for? Oh! if it had pleased God to give me a single glimpse of what I now see, thirty years ago, how true an estimate I should have formed of the littleness—the vanity—of human applause! How much happier would my end have been! How much nearer should I have come to the character of a true philosopher, an impartial, independent, sincere searcher after truth, for its own sake!"

"But honours of this kind are of admirable service to science, Mr E——," said I, "as supplying strong incentives and stimulants to a pursuit of philosophy."

"Yes; but does it not argue a defect in the constitution of men's minds to require them? What is the use of stimulants in medicine, doctor? Don't they presuppose a morbid sluggishness in the parts they are applied to? Do you ever stimulate a *healthy* organ? So is it with the little honours and distinctions we are speaking of. Directly a man becomes *anxious* about obtaining them, his mind has lost its healthy tone—its sympathies with truth—with real philosophy."

"Would you, then, discourage striving for them? Would you banish honours and prizes from the scientific world?"

"Assuredly—altogether—did we but exist in a better state of society than we do. * * What is the proper spirit in which, as matters at present stand, a philosopher should accept of honours?—Merely as evidences, testimonials, to the multitude of those who are *otherwise* incapable of appreciating his merits, and would set him down as a dreamer, a visionary—but that they saw the estimation in which he was held by those who are likely to canvass his claims strictly. They *compel* the deference, if not respect, of the οἱ πολλοί. A philosopher ought to receive them, therefore, as it were, in *self-defence*—a shut mouth to babbling, envious gainsayers. Were all the world philosophers, in the *true* sense of the word, not merely would honours be unnecessary, but an insult—a reproach. Directly a philosopher is conscious that the love of fame, the ambition to secure such distinctions, is gradually interweaving itself with the very texture of his mind—that

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such considerations are becoming *necessary in any degree* to prompt him to undertake or prosecute scientific pursuits—he may write ICHABOD on the door of his soul's temple, for the glory is departed. His motives are spurious, his fires false! To the exact extent of the necessity for such motives is, as it were, the pure ore of his soul adulterated. Minerva's jealous eyes can detect the slightest vacillation or inconsistency in her votaries, and discover her rival even before the votary himself is sensible of her existence; and withdraws from her faithless admirer in cold disdain, perhaps never to return.

"Do you think that Archimedes, Plato, or Sir Isaac Newton, would have cared a straw for even royal honours? The true test, believe me—the almost infallible criterion—of a man's having attained to real greatness of mind—to the true philosophic temper—is, his indifference to all sorts of honours and distinctions. Why—what seeks he—or, at least, professes to seek—but TRUTH? Is he to stop in the race, to look with Atalanta after the golden apples?

"He should *endure* honours, not go out of his way to seek them. If one apple hitch in his vest, he may carry it with him, not stop to dislodge it. Scientific distinctions are absolutely necessary in the present state of society, *because* it is defective. A mere ambitious struggle for college honours, through rivalry, has induced many a man to enter so far upon philosophical studies, as that their charms, unfolding in proportion to his progress, have been, *of themselves*, at last sufficient to prevail upon him to go onwards—to love Science for *herself* alone. Honours make a man open his eyes, who would else have gone to his grave with them shut: and when once he has seen the divinity of truth, he laughs at obstacles, and follows it through evil and through good report—if his soul be properly constituted—if it have any of the nobler sympathies of our nature. That is my *homily on honours*," said E——, with a faint smile. "I have not wilfully preached and practised different things, I assure you," he continued, with a modest air; "but, through life, have striven to act upon these principles. Still, I never saw so clearly as at this moment how small my success has been—to what an extent I have been influenced by undue motives—as far as an overvaluing of the world's honours may be so considered. *Now*, methinks, I see through no such magnifying medium; the mists and vapours are dispersing; and I begin to see that these objects are in themselves little, even to nothingness. The general retrospect of my life is far from satisfactory," continued E—— with a sigh, "and fills me with real sorrow!" "Why?" I inquired, with surprise. "Why, for this one reason—because I have, in a measure, sacrificed my *religion* to philosophy! Oh! will my Maker thus be put off with the mere lees, the refuse of my time and energies? For *one hour* in the day that I have devoted to Him, have I not given twelve or fourteen to my own pursuits? What shall I say of this shortly—in a few hours—perhaps moments—when I stand suddenly in the presence of God—when I see Him face to face! Oh, doctor, my heart sinks and sickens at the thought! Shall I not be *speechless*, as one of old?"

I told him I thought he was unnecessarily severe with himself—that he "wrote bitter things against himself."

"I thought so once, nay all my life, myself, doctor," said he solemnly—"but mark my words, as those of a dying man—you will think as I do now, when you come to be in my circumstances!"

The above, feebly conveyed perhaps to the reader, may be considered "THE LAST WORDS OF A PHILOSOPHER!" * They made an impression on my mind which has never been effaced, and, I trust, never will. The reader need not suspect Mr E—— of "prosing." The sentiments I have here endeavoured to record were uttered with

* "Les dernières paroles du philosophe furent consacrées à combattre ce systeme qui change l'arène scientifique en une arène de gladiateurs," &c.—*French Translator.*

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no pompous pedantry of manner, but with the simplest, most modest air, and in the most silvery tones of voice I ever listened to. He often paused, from faintness; and, at the conclusion, his voice grew almost inaudible, and he wiped the thick-standing dews from his forehead. He begged me in a low whisper to kneel down, and read him one of the church prayers—the one appointed for those in prospect of death: I took down the prayer-book and complied, though my emotions would not suffer me to speak in more than an often-interrupted whisper. He lay perfectly silent throughout with his clasped hands pointing upwards; and, when I had concluded, he responded feebly but fervently, "Amen — Amen!" and the tears gushed down his cheeks. My heart was melted within me. The silk cap had slipped from his head, and his long, loose, silvery hair streamed over his bed-dress: his appearance was that of a dying prophet of old!

I fear, however, that I am going on at too great length for the reader's patience, and must pause. For my own part, I could linger over the remembrances of these solemn scenes for ever: but I shall hasten on to the "last scene of all." It did not take place till near a fortnight after the interview above narrated. His manner during that time evinced no tumultuous ecstasies of soul; none of the boisterous extravagance of enthusiasm. His departure was like that of the sun, sinking gradually and finally, lower—lower—lower—no sudden upflashings—no quivering—no flickering unsteadiness about his fading rays!

*Tuesday, 13th October.*—Miss E—— sent word that her uncle appeared dying, and had expressed a wish to see both Dr D—— and me. I therefore despatched a note to Dr D——, requesting him to meet me at a certain place, and then hurried through my list of calls, so as to have finished by three o'clock. By four, we were both in the room of the dying philosopher. Miss E—— sat by his bedside, her eyes swollen with weeping, and was in the act of kissing her uncle's cheek when we entered. Mr F——, an exemplary clergyman, who had been one of E——'s earliest and dearest friends, sat at the foot of the bed, with a copy of Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*, from which he was reading in a low tone, at the request of E——. The appearance of the latter was very interesting. At his own instance, he had, not long before, been shaved, washed, and had a change of linen; and the bed was also but recently made, and was not at all tumbled or disordered. The mournful tolling of the church-bell for a funeral was also heard at intervals, and added to the solemnity of the scene. I have seldom felt in such a state of excitement as I was on first entering the room. He shook hands with each of us, or rather we shook his hands, for he could hardly lift them from the bed. "Well—thank you for coming to bid me farewell!" said he with a smile; adding presently, "Will you allow Mr F—— to proceed with what he is reading?" Of course we nodded, and sat in silence listening. I watched E——'s features; they were much wasted—but exhibited no traces of pain. His eye, though rather sunk in the socket, was full of the calmness and confidence of unwavering hope, and often directed upwards, with a devout expression. A most heavenly serenity was diffused over his countenance. His lips occasionally moved, as if in the utterance of prayer. When Mr F—— had closed the book, the first words uttered by E—— were, "Oh! the infinite goodness of God!"

"Do you feel that your 'anchor is within the veil?'" inquired F——.

"Oh!—yes—yes!—My vessel is steadily moored—the tide of life goes fast away—I am forgetting that I ever sailed on its sea!" replied E——, closing his eyes.

"The star of faith shines clearest in the night of expiring nature!" exclaimed F——.

"The Sun—the Sun of faith say rather," replied E——, in a tone of fervent exultation; "it turns my night into day—it warms my soul—it rekindles my energies!—Sun—Sun of

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Righteousness!" he exclaimed faintly. Miss E—— kissed him repeatedly with deep emotion. "Emma, my love!" he whispered, "hope thou in God! See how he will support thee in Death!"—She burst into tears.—"Will you promise me, love, to read the little Bible I gave you, when I am gone—especially the *New Testament?*—Do—do, love."

"I will—I"——, replied Miss E——, almost choked with her emotions. She could say no more.

"Dr ——," he addressed me, "I feel more towards you than I can express; your services—services"——he grew very pale and faint. I rose and poured out a glass of wine, and put it to his lips. He drank a few tea-spoonfuls, and it revived him.

"Well!" he exclaimed, in a stronger voice than I had before heard him speak; "I thank God I leave the world in perfect peace with all mankind! There is but one thing that grieves me, in these my last thoughts on life—the general neglect of religion among men of science." Dr D—— said it must afford him great consolation to reflect on the steadfast regard for religion which *he* himself had always evidenced. "No, no—I have gone nearly as far astray as any of them; but God's rod has brought me back again. I thank God devoutly that he ever afflicted me as I have been afflicted through life—He knows I do!" * * Some one mentioned the prevalence of Materialism. He lamented it bitterly; but assured us that several of the most eminent men of the age—naming them—believed firmly in the immateriality and immortality of the human soul.

"Do *you* feel firmly convinced of it, on natural and philosophical grounds?" inquired Dr D——.

"I do; and have, ever since I instituted an inquiry on the subject. *I* think the *difficulty* is to believe the reverse—when it is owned, on all hands, that nothing in Nature's changes suggests the idea of annihilation. I own that doubts have very often crossed my mind on the subject, but could never see the reason of them."

"But *your* confidence does not rest on the barren grounds of reason," said I; "you believe in Him who brought 'life and immortality' into the world."

"Yes—'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!'"

"Do you *never* feel a pang of regret at leaving life?" I inquired.

"No, no, no!" he replied with emphasis. "Life and I are grown unfit for each other! My sympathies, my hopes, my joys, are too large for it! Why should I, just got into the haven, think of risking shipwreck again?"

* * * *

He lay still for nearly twenty minutes without speaking. His breathing was evidently accomplished with great difficulty; and when his eyes occasionally fixed on any of us, we perceived that their expression was altered. He did not seem to see what he looked at. I noticed his fingers, also, slowly twitching or scratching the bed-clothes. Still the expression of his features was calm and tranquil as ever. He was murmuring something in Miss E——'s ear; and she whispered to us that he said, "Don't go—*I shall want you at six.*" Within about a quarter of six o'clock, he inquired where Emma was, and Dr D——, and Mr F——, and myself. We severally answered that we sat around him.

"I have not *seen* you for the last twenty minutes. Shake hands with me!" We did. "Emma, my sweet love!—put your arm round my neck—I am cold, very cold." Her tears fell fast on his face. "Don't cry, love, don't—I am quite happy! God—God bless you, love!"

His lower jaw began to droop a little.

Mr F——, moved almost to tears, rose from his chair, and noiselessly kneeled down beside him.

"Have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ!" he exclaimed, looking steadfastly into his face.

"I DO!" he answered distinctly, while a faint smile stole over his drooping features.

"Let us pray!" whispered Mr F——; and we all knelt down in silence. I was never so overpowered in my life. I thought I should have

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been choked with suppressing my emotions. "O Lord, our heavenly Father!" commenced Mr F——, in a low tone, "receive Thou the spirit of this our dying brother"——. E—— slowly elevated his left hand, and kept it pointing upwards for a few moments, when it suddenly dropped, and a long, deep respiration announced that this great and good man had breathed his last!

No one in the room spoke or stirred for several minutes; and I almost thought I could hear the beatings of our hearts. He died within a few moments of six o'clock. Yes—there lay the sad effigy of our deceased "guide, philosopher, and friend"—and yet, why call it sad? I could detect no trace of sadness in his features. He had left the world in peace and joy; he had lived well, and died as he had lived. I can now appreciate the force of that prayer of one of old—"Let ME die the death of the righteous, and let MY last end be like his!"

There was some talk among his friends of erecting a tablet to his memory in Westminster Abbey; but it has been dropped. We soon lose the recollection of departed excellence, if it require anything like active exertion.

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# CHAPTER XIX.

## THE STATESMAN.

AMBITION!—Its sweets and bitters—its splendid miseries—its wrinkling cares—its wasting agonies—its triumphs and downfalls—who has not, in some degree, known and felt them? Moralists, historians, and novelists, have filled libraries in picturing their dreary yet dazzling details; nevertheless, Ambition's votaries, or rather victims, are as numerous, as enthusiastic as ever!

Such is the mounting quality existing in almost every one's breast, that no "Pelion upon Ossa" heapings, and accumulations of facts and lessons, can keep it down. Fully as I feel the truth of this remark, vain and futile though the attempt may prove, I cannot resist the inclination to contribute my mite towards the vast memorials of Ambition's martyrs!

My specific purpose in first making the notes from which the ensuing narrative is taken, and in now presenting it to the public—in thus pointing to the spectacle of a sun suddenly and disastrously eclipsed while blazing at its zenith—is this: To show the steps by which a really great mind—an eager and impetuous spirit—was voluntarily sacrificed at the shrine of political ambition: foregoing, nay, despising the substantial joys and comforts of elegant privacy, and persisting, even to destruction, in its frantic efforts to bear up against, and grapple with cares too mighty for the mind of man. It is a solemn lesson, imprinted on my memory in great and glaring characters; and if I do but succeed in bringing a few of them before the reader, they may serve at least to check extravagant expectations, by disclosing the misery which often lies cankering behind the most splendid popularity. If, by the way, I should be found inaccurate in my use of political technicalities and allusions, the reader will be pleased to overlook it, on the score of my profession.

I recollect, when at Cambridge, over-

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hearing some men of my college talk about the "splendid talents of young Stafford,"* who had lately become a member of —— Hall; and they said so much about the "great *hit*" he had made in his recent debut at one of the debating societies—which then flourished in considerable numbers—that I resolved to take the earliest opportunity of going to hear and judge for myself. That was soon afforded me. Though not a member of this society, I gained admission through a friend. The room was crammed to the very door; and I was not long in discovering the "star of the evening" in the person of a young fellow-commoner, of careless and even slovenly appearance. The first glimpse of his features disposed me to believe all I had heard in his favour. There was no sitting for *effect;* nothing artificial about his demeanour—no careful carelessness of attitude—no knitting of the brows, or painful straining of the eyes, to look brilliant or acute! The mere absence of all these little conceits and fooleries, so often disfiguring "talented young speakers," went, in my estimation, to the account of his superiority. His face was "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and its lineaments were very deeply and strongly marked. There was a wondrous power and fire in the eyes, which gleamed with restless energy whichever way he looked. They were neither large nor prominent—but all soul—all expression. It was startling to find their glance suddenly settled on one. His forehead, as much as I saw of it, was knotted and expansive. There was a prevailing air of anxiety about his worn features, young as he was—being then only twenty-one—as if his mind were every instant hard at work—which an inaccurate observer might have set down to the score of ill-nature, especially when coupled with the matter-of-fact, unsmiling nods of recognition, with which he returned the polite inclinations of those who passed him. To me, sitting watching him, it seemed as though his mind were of too intense and energetic a character to have any sympathies with the small matters transpiring around him. I knew his demeanour was simple, unaffected, genuine, and it was refreshing to see it. It predisposed me to like him, if only for being free from the ridiculous airs assumed by some with whom I associated. He allowed five or six speakers to address the society, without making notes, or joining in the noisy exclamations and interruptions of those around him. At length he rose amid perfect silence—the silence of expectant criticism whetted by rivalry. He seemed at first a little flustered, and, for about five minutes, spoke hesitatingly and somewhat unconnectedly—with the air of a man who does not know exactly how to *get at* his subject, which he is yet conscious of having thoroughly mastered. At length, however, the current ran smooth, and gradually widened and swelled into such a stream—a torrent of real eloquence—as I never before or since heard poured from the lips of a young speaker—or, possibly, any speaker whatsoever, except himself, in after life. He seemed long disinclined to enhance the effect of what he was uttering by oratorical gesture. His hands both grasped his cap, which, ere long, was compressed, twisted, and crushed out of all shape; but, as he warmed, he laid it down, and used his arms, the levers of eloquence, with the grace and energy of a natural orator. The effect he produced was prodigious. We were all carried away with him, as if by whirlwind force. As for myself, I felt, for the first time, convinced that oratory such as that could persuade me to anything. As might have been expected, his speech was fraught with the faults incident to youth and inexperience, and was pervaded with a glaring hue of extravagance and exaggeration. Some of his "facts" were preposterously incorrect, and his inferences false; but there was such a prodigious power of language—such a blaze of fancy—such a stretch and grasp of thought—and such casuistical dexterity evinced throughout, as

* It can hardly be necessary, I presume, to reiterate, that whatever names individuals are indicated by in these papers are fictitious.

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indicated the presence of first-rate capabilities. He concluded amid a storm of applause; and before his enthusiastic auditors, whispering together their surprise and admiration, could observe his motions, he had slipped away and left the room.

The excitement into which this young man's "*first appearance*" had thrown me, kept me awake the greater part of the night; and I well recollect feeling a transient fit of disinclination for the dull and sombre profession of medicine, for which I was destined. That evening's display warranted my indulging high expectations of the future eminence of young Stafford; but I hardly went so far as to think of once seeing him Secretary of State, and leader of the British House of Commons. Accident soon afterwards introduced me to him, at the supper-table of a mutual friend. I found him distinguished as well by that simplicity and frankness ever attending the consciousness of real greatness, as by the recklessness, irritability, and impetuosity of one aware that he is far superior to those around him, and in possession of that species of talent which is appreciable by all—of those rare powers which insure a man the command over his fellows—keen and bitter sarcasm, and extraordinary readiness of repartee. Then, again, all his predilections were political. He utterly disregarded the popular pursuits at college. Whatever he said, read, or thought, had reference to his "ruling passion"—and that not by fits and starts, under the arbitrary impulses of rivalry or enthusiasm, but steadily and systematically. I knew from himself, that, before his twenty-third year, he had read over and made notes of the whole of the parliamentary debates, and have seen a table which he constructed for reference, on a most admirable and useful plan. The minute accuracy of his acquaintance with the whole course of political affairs, obtained by such laborious methods as this, may be easily conceived. His powers of memory were remarkable—as well for their capacity as tenacity; and the presence of mind and judgment with which he availed himself of his acquisitions, convinced his opponent that he had undertaken an arduous, if not hopeless task, in rising to reply to him. It was impossible not to see, even in a few minutes' interview with him, that Ambition had "marked him for her own." Alas! what a stormy career is before this young man! I have often thought, while listening to his fervid harangues and conversations, and witnessing the twin fires of intellect and passion flashing from his eyes. One large ingredient in his composition was a most morbid sensibility; and then he devoted himself to every pursuit with a headlong, undistinguishing enthusiasm and energy, which inspired me with lively apprehensions lest he should wear himself out, and fall by the way, before he could actually enter on the great arena of public life. His forehead was already furrowed with premature wrinkles!

His application was incessant. He rose every morning at five, and retired pretty regularly by eleven.

Our acquaintance gradually ripened into friendship, and we visited each other with mutual frequency and cordiality. When he left college, he entreated me to accompany him to the Continent; but financial difficulties on my part forbade it. He was possessed of a tolerably ample fortune; and, at the time of quitting England, was actually in treaty with Sir —— —— for a borough. I left Cambridge a few months after Mr Stafford; and, as we were mutually engaged with the arduous and absorbing duties of our respective professions, we saw and heard little or nothing of one another for several years. In the very depth of my distress—during the first four years of my establishment in London—I recollect once calling at the hotel which he generally made his town quarters, for the purpose of soliciting his assistance in the way of introductions; when, to my anguish and mortification, I heard, that on that very morning he had quitted the hotel for Calais, on his return to the Continent.

At length Mr Stafford, who had long stood contemplating on the brink, dashed into the tempestuous waters

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of public life, and emerged—a member of Parliament for the borough of ——. I happened to see the Gazette which announced the event, about two years after the occurrence of the accident which elevated me into fortune. I did not then require any one's interference on my behalf, being content with the independent exercise of my profession; and even if I had been unfortunate, too long an interval had elapsed, I thought, to warrant my renewing a mere college acquaintance with such a man as Mr Stafford. I was content, therefore, to keep barely within the extreme rays of this rising sun in the political hemisphere. I shall not easily forget the feelings of intense interest with which I saw, in one of the morning papers, the name of my *quondam* college friend, "Mr Stafford," standing at the head of a speech of two columns' length—or the delight with which I paused over the frequent interruptions of "*Hear, hear!*"—"*Hear, hear, hear!*"—"*Cheers*"—"*Loud Cheers*"—which marked the speaker's progress in the favour of the House. "We regret," said the reporter, in a note at the end, "that the noise in the gallery prevented our giving at greater length the eloquent and effective maiden speech of Mr Stafford, which was cheered perpetually throughout, and excited a strong sensation in the House." In my enthusiasm, I did not fail to purchase a copy of that newspaper, and have it now in my possession. It needed not the inquiries which everywhere met me, "Have you read Mr Stafford's maiden speech?" to assure me of his splendid prospects, the reward of his early and honourable toils. His "maiden speech" formed the sole engrossing topic of conversation to my wife and me as we sat at supper that evening; and she was asking me some such question as is generally uppermost in ladies' minds on the mention of a popular character, "What sort of *looking* man he was when I knew him at Cambridge?"—when a forcible appeal to the knocker and bell, followed by the servant's announcing, that "a gentleman wished to speak to me directly," brought me into my patients' room. The candles, which were only just lit, did not enable me to see the person of my visitor very distinctly; but the instant he spoke to me, removing a handkerchief which he held to his mouth, I recognised—could it be possible?—the very Mr Stafford we had been speaking of! I shook him affectionately by the hand, and should have proceeded to compliment him warmly on his last evening's success in the House, but that his dreadful paleness of features and discomposure of manner disconcerted me.

"My dear Mr Stafford, what is the matter? Are you ill? Has anything happened?" I inquired anxiously.

"Yes, doctor—perhaps fatally ill," he replied, with great agitation. "I thought I would call on you on my way from the House, which I have but just left. It is not my fault that we have not maintained our college acquaintance; but of that more hereafter. I wish your advice—your honest opinion on my case. For God's sake, don't deceive me! Last evening I spoke, for the first time, in the House, at some length, and with all the energy I could command. You may guess the consequent exhaustion I have suffered during the whole of this day; and this evening, though much indisposed with fever and a cough, I imprudently went down to the House, when Sir —— —— so shamefully misrepresented certain portions of the speech I had delivered the preceding night, that I felt bound to rise and vindicate myself. I was betrayed into greater length and vehemence than I had anticipated; and, on sitting down, was seized with such an irrepressible fit of coughing, as at last forced me to leave the House. Hoping it would abate, I walked for some time about the lobby—and, at length, thought it better to return home than re-enter the House. While hunting after my carriage, the violence of the cough subsided into a small hacking, irritating one, accompanied with spitting. After driving about as far as Whitehall, the vivid glare of one of the street-lamps happened to fall suddenly on

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my white pocket-handkerchief, and, O God!" continued Mr Stafford almost gasping for breath, "this horrid sight met my eye!" He spread out a pocket-handkerchief, all spotted and dabbled with blood! It was with the utmost difficulty that he communicated to me what is gone before. "Oh! it's all over with me—the chapter's ended, I'm afraid!" he murmured almost inarticulately, and, while I was feeling his pulse, he fainted. I placed him instantly in a recumbent position—loosened his neckerchief and shirt-collar—dashed some cold water in his face—and he presently recovered. He shook his head, in silence, very mournfully—his features expressing utter hopelessness. I sat down close beside him, and, grasping his hand in mine, endeavoured to reassure him. The answers he returned to the few questions I asked him, convinced me that the spitting of blood was unattended with danger, provided he could be kept quiet in body and mind. There was not the slightest symptom of radical mischief in the lungs. A glance at his stout build of body, especially at his ample sonorous chest, forbade the supposition. I explained to him, with even professional minuteness of detail, the true nature of the accident, its effects, and method of cure. He listened to me with deep attention, and at last seemed convinced. He clasped his hands, exclaiming, "Thank God! thank God!" and entreated me to do on the spot what I had directed to be done by the apothecary—to bleed him. I complied, and, from a large orifice, took a considerable quantity of blood. I then accompanied him home—saw him consigned to bed—prescribed the usual lowering remedies—absolutely forbade him to open his lips, except in the slightest whisper possible; and left him calm, and restored to a tolerable measure of self-possession.

One of the most exquisite sources of gratification, arising from the discharge of our professional duties, is the disabusing our patients of their harrowing and groundless apprehensions of danger. One such instance as is related above, is to me an ample recompense for months of miscellaneous, and often thankless toil, in the exercise of my profession. Is it not, in a manner, plucking a patient from the very brink of the grave, to which he had despairingly consigned himself, and placing him once more in the busy throng of life—the very heart of society? I have seen men of the strongest intellect and nerve—whom the detection of a novel and startling symptom has terrified into giving themselves up for lost—in an instant dispossessed of their apprehensions, by explaining to them the real nature of what has alarmed them.* The alarm, however, occasioned by the rupture of a blood-vessel in or near the lungs, is seldom unwarranted, although it may be excessive: and though we can soon determine whether or not the accident is in the nature of a primary disease, or symptomatic of some incurable pulmonary affection, and dissipate or corroborate our patient's apprehensions accordingly, it is no more than prudent to warn one who has once experienced this injury, against any exertions or excesses which have a tendency to interfere with the action of the lungs, by keeping in sight the *possibility* of a fatal relapse. To return, however, to Mr Stafford.

His recovery was tardier than I could have expected. His extraordinary excitability completely neutralised the effect of my lowering and calm-

* One instance presses so strongly on my recollection that I cannot help adverting to it:—I was one day summoned in haste to an eminent merchant in the city, who thought he had grounds for apprehending occasion for one of the most appalling operations known in surgery. When I arrived, on finding the case not exactly within my province, I was going to leave him in the hands of a surgeon; but seeing that his alarm had positively half-maddened him, I resolved to give him what assistance I could. I soon found that his fears were chimerical; but he would not believe me. When, however, I succeeded in convincing him that "all was yet right with him," by referring the sensations which had alarmed him to an unperceived derangement of his *dress*, tongue cannot utter, nor I ever forget, the ecstasy with which he at last "gave to the winds his fears." He insisted on my accepting one of the largest fees that had ever been tendered me.

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ing system of treatment. I could not persuade him to *give his mind rest;* and the mere glimpse of a newspaper occasioned such a flutter and agitation of spirits, that I forbade them altogether for a fortnight. I was in the habit of writing my prescriptions in his presence, and pausing long over them for the purpose of unsuspectedly observing him; and though he would tell me that his "mind was still as a stagnant pool," his intense air, his corrugated brows and fixed eyes, evinced the most active exercise of thought. When in a sort of half-dozing state, he would often mutter about the subjects nearest his heart. "Ah! *must* go out—the —— Bill, their touchstone—ay—though —— and his Belial-tongue."

* * * *

"'Tis cruel—'tis tantalising, doctor," he said one morning, "to find one's-self held by the foot in this way, like a chained eagle! The world forgets every one that slips for a moment from public view. Alas! alas! my plans—my projects—are all unravelling!"—"Thy sun, young man, may go down at noon!" I often thought, when reflecting on his restless and ardent spirit. He wanted case-hardening—long *physical* training—to fit him for the harassing and exhausting campaign on which he had entered. Truly, truly, your politician should have a frame of adamant, and a mind "thereto conforming strictly." He should be utterly inaccessible to emotion—and especially to the finer feelings of our nature, since there is no room for their exercise. He should forget his heart, his family, his friends—everything except his own interest and ambition. It should be with him as with a consummate intriguer of old—

No rest, no breathing-time had he, or lack'd—
Lest from the slippery steep he suddenly
Might fall. Of every joy forgetful quite,
Life's softness had no charm for him——.
——————————His object sole
To cheat the silly world of her applause—his eye
Fix'd with stern steadfastness upon the Star
That shed but madness on him.

I found Mr Stafford one day in high chafe about a sarcastic allusion in the debate to a sentiment which he had expressed in Parliament—"Oh! one might wither that fellow with a word or two, the stilted noodle!" said he, pointing to the passage, while his eye glanced like lightning.

"You'll more likely wither your own prospects of ever making the trial, if you don't moderate your exertions," I replied. He smiled incredulously, and made me no answer, but continued twisting about his pencil-case with a rapidity and energy which showed the high excitement under which he was labouring. His hard, jerking, irregular pulse, beating on the average a hundred a minute, excited my lively apprehensions, lest the increased action of the heart should bring on a second fit of blood-spitting. I saw clearly that it would be in vain for him to court the repose essential to his convalescence, so long as he continued in town; and, with infinite difficulty, prevailed on him to betake himself to the country. We wrung a promise from him that he would set about "unbending"—"unharnessing," as he called it—that he would "give his constitution fair play." He acknowledged that, to gain the objects he had proposed to himself, it was necessary for him "to husband his resources;" and briskly echoed my quotation—"*neque semper arcum tendit Apollo.*" In short, we dismissed him in the confident expectation of seeing him return, after a requisite interval, with recruited energies of body and mind. He had scarcely, however, been gone a fortnight, before a paragraph ran the round of the daily papers, announcing, as nearly ready for publication, a political pamphlet, "by Charles Stafford, Esq. M.P.;"—and in less than three weeks—sure enough—a packet was forwarded to my residence, from the publisher, containing my rebellious patient's pamphlet, accompanied with the following hasty note:—"Ἀσκληπιε—Even with you!—you did not, you will recollect, interdict *writing;* and I have contrived to *amuse* myself with the accompanying trifle.—Please look at page ——, and see the kind things I have said of poor Lord ——, the worthy who attacked me the other evening in the House

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behind my back." This "trifle" was in the form of a pamphlet of sixty-four pages, full of masterly argumentation and impetuous eloquence; but unfortunately, owing to the publisher's dilatoriness, it came "a day behind the fair," and attracted but little attention.

His temporary rustication, however, was attended with at least two beneficial results—recruited health, and the heart of Lady Emma ——, the beautiful daughter of a nobleman remotely connected with Mr Stafford's family. This attachment proved powerful enough to alienate him for a while from the turmoils of political life; for not only did the beauty, wealth, and accomplishments of Lady Emma —— render her a noble prize, worthy of great effort to obtain, but a powerful military rival had taken the field before Mr Stafford made his appearance, and seemed disposed to move heaven and earth to carry her off. It is needless to say how such a consideration was calculated to rouse and absorb all the energies of the young senator, and keep him incessantly on the *qui vive*. It is said that the lady wavered for some time, uncertain to which of her brilliant suitors she should give the nod of preference. Chance decided the matter. It came to pass that a contested election arose in the county, and Mr Stafford made a very animated and successful speech from the hustings (not far from which, at a window, was standing Lady Emma) in favour of her ladyship's brother, one of the candidates. *To triumphe!* That happy evening the enemy "surrendered at discretion;" and, ere long, it was known far and wide that, in newspaper slang, "an affair was on the *tapis*" between Mr Stafford and the "beautiful and accomplished Lady Emma ——," &c. &c.

It is my firm persuasion that the diversion in his pursuits effected by this "affair," by withdrawing Mr Stafford for a considerable interval from cares and anxieties which he was physically unable to cope with, lengthened his life for many years; giving England a splendid statesman, and this, my Diary, the sad records which are now to be laid before the reader.

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One characteristic of our profession, standing, as it were, in such sad and high relief, as to scare many a sensitive mind from entering into its service, is, that it is concerned, almost exclusively, with the dark side of humanity. As carnage and carrion guide the gloomy flight of the vulture, so MISERY is the signal for a medical man's presence. *We* have to do daily with broken hearts, blighted hopes, pain, sorrow, death! And though the satisfaction arising from the due discharge of our duties be that of a good Samaritan—a rich return—we cannot help counting the heavy cost—aching hearts, weary limbs, privations, ingratitude. Dark array! It may be considered placing the matter in a whimsical point of view; yet I have often thought that the two great professions of Law and Medicine are but foul carrion birds—the one preying on the moral, as the other on the physical rottenness of mankind.

"Those who are well need not a physician," say the Scriptures; and on this ground it is easy to explain the melancholy hue pervading these papers. They are mirrors reflecting the dark colours exposed to them. It is true that some remote relations, arising out of the particular combinations of circumstances first requiring our professional interference, may afford, as it were, a passing gleam of distant sunshine, in the development of some trait of beautiful character, some wondrous "good, from seeming ill educed;" but these are incidental only, and evanescent—enhancing, not relieving the gloom and sorrow amid which we move. A glimpse of heaven would but aggravate the horrors of hell! These chilling reflections force themselves on my mind when surveying the very many entries in my Diary, concerning the eminent individual whose case I am now narrating—concerning one who seemed born to bask in the brightness of life—to reap the full harvest of its joys and comforts, and yet "walked in darkness!"

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Why should it have been so? Answer —*Ambition!*

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The reader must hurry on with me through the next ten years of Mr Stafford's life, during which period he rose with almost unprecedented rapidity. He had hardly time, as it were, to get warm in his nest, before he was called to lodge in the one above him, and then the one above that; and so on upwards, till people began to view his progress with their hands shading their dazzled eyes, while they exclaimed, "*fast for the top of the tree!*" He was formed for political popularity. He had a most winning, captivating, commanding style of delivery, which was always employed in the steady, consistent advocacy of one line of principles. The splendour of his talents—his tact and skill in debate—the immense extent and accuracy of his political information—early attracted the notice of Ministers, and he was not suffered to wait long before they secured his services, by giving him a popular and influential office. During all this time he maintained a very friendly intimacy with me, and often put into requisition my professional services. About eight o'clock, one Saturday evening, I received the following note from Mr Stafford:—

"Dear ——, excuse excessive haste. Let me intreat you (I will hereafter account for the suddenness of this application) to make instant arrangements for spending with me the *whole* of to-morrow (Sunday) at ——, and to set off from town in time for breakfasting with Lady Emma and myself. Your presence is required by most urgent and *special* business; but allow me to beg you will appear at breakfast with an unconcerned air—as a chance visiter.—Yours always faithfully,

"C. Stafford."

The words "*whole*" and "*special*" were thrice underscored; and this, added to the very unusual illegibility of the writing, betrayed an urgency, and even agitation, which a little disconcerted me. The abruptness of the application occasioned me some trouble in making the requisite arrangements. As, however, it was not a busy time with me, I contrived to find a substitute for the morrow in my friend Dr D——.

It was on a lovely Sabbath morning, in July 18—, that, in obedience to the above hurried summons, I set off on horseback from the murky metropolis; and, after rather more than a two hours' ride, found myself entering the grounds of Mr Stafford, who had recently purchased a beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames. It was about nine o'clock, and Nature seemed but freshly awakened from the depth of her over-night's slumbers, her tresses all uncurled, as it were, and her perfumed robes glistening with the pearls of morning dew. A deep and rich repose brooded over the scene, subduing every feeling of my soul into sympathy. A groom took my horse; and, finding that neither Mr Stafford nor Lady Emma were yet stirring, I resolved to walk about and enjoy the scenery. In front of the house stretched a fine lawn, studded here and there with laurel bushes and other elegant shrubs, and sloping down to the river's edge; and on each side of the villa, and behind, were trees disposed with the most beautiful and picturesque effect imaginable. Birds were caroling cheerfully and loudly on all sides of me, as though they were intoxicated with their own "woodland melody." I walked about as amid enchantment, breathing the balminess and fragrance of the atmosphere, as the wild horse snuffs the scent of the desert. How keenly are Nature's beauties appreciable when but rarely seen by her unfortunate admirer, who is condemned to a town life!

I stood on the lawn by the river's edge, watching the ripple of the retiring tide, pondering within myself whether it was possible for such scenes as these to have lost all charm for their restless owner. Did he relish or tolerate them? Could the pursuits of ambition have blunted, deadened his sensibilities to the beauty of Nature, the delights of home? These thoughts were passing through my mind, when

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I was startled by the tapping of a loose glove over my shoulder; and, on turning round, beheld Mr Stafford, in his flowered morning gown, and his face partially shaded from the glare of the morning sun, beneath a broad-rimmed straw hat. "Good-morning, doctor—good-morning," said he; "a thousand thanks for your attention to my note of last night; but see! yonder stands Lady Emma, waiting breakfast for us," pointing to her ladyship, who was standing at the window of the breakfast-room. Mr Stafford put his arm into mine, and we walked up to the house. "My dear sir, what can be the meaning of your "—— said I, with an anxious look.

"Not a word—not a breath—if you please, till we are alone after breakfast."

"Well—you are bent on tantalising! What *can* be the matter? What is this mountain mystery?"

"It may prove a molehill, perhaps," said he carelessly; "but we'll see after breakfast."

"What an enchanting spot you have of it!" I exclaimed, pausing and looking around me.

"Oh, very paradisaical, I dare say," he replied, with an air of indifference that was quite laughable. "By the way," he added hurriedly, "did you hear any rumour about Lord ——'s resignation late last night?" "Yes." "And his successor—is *he* talked of?" he inquired eagerly. "Mr C——." "Mr C——! Is it possible? Ah, ha" —he muttered, raising his hand to his cheek, and looking thoughtfully downwards.

"Come, come, Mr Stafford, 'tis now my turn. Do drop these eternal politics for a few moments, I beg."—"Ay, ay, 'still harping on my daughter!' I'll *sink the shop*, however, for a while, as our town friends say. But I really beg pardon—'tis rude, very. But here we are. Lady Emma, Dr ——," said he, as we approached her ladyship through the opened stained-glass doorway. She sat before the breakfast urn, looking, to my eyes, as bloomingly beautiful as at the time of her marriage, though ten summers had waved their silken pinions over her head, but so softly as scarcely to flutter or fade a feature in passing. Yes, thus she sat in her native loveliness and dignity, the airiness of girlhood passed away into the mellowed maturity of womanhood! She looked the *beau-ideal* of simple elegance, in her long snowy morning dress, her clustering auburn hair surmounted with a slight gossamer network of blonde—not an ornament about her! I have her figure, even at this interval of time, most vividly before me, as she sat on that memorable morning, unconscious that the errand which made me her guest involved—but I will not anticipate. She adored, nay, idolised her husband—little as she saw of him—and he was in turn as fondly attached to her as a man could be, whose whole soul was swallowed up in ambition. Yes, he was not the first to whom political pursuits have proved a very disease, shedding blight and mildew over the heart!

I thought I detected an appearance of restraint in the manner of each. Lady Emma often cast a furtive glance of anxiety at her husband—and with reason—for his features wore an air of repressed uneasiness. He was now and then absent, and, when addressed by either of us, would reply with a momentary sternness of manner—passing, however, instantly away—which showed that his mind was occupied with unpleasant or troubled thoughts. He seemed at last aware that his demeanour attracted our observation, and took to acting. All traces of anxiety or uneasiness disappeared, and gave place to his usual perfect urbanity and cheerfulness. Lady Emma's manner towards me, too, was cooler than usual, which I attributed to the fact of my presence not having been sufficiently accounted for. My embarrassment may be easily conceived.

"What a delicious morning!" exclaimed Lady Emma, looking through the window at the fresh blue sky and the cheery prospect beneath. We echoed her sentiments. "I think," said I, "that, could I call such a little

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paradise as this *mine*, I would quit the smoke and uproar of London for ever!" "I wish all thought with you, Dr ——," replied her ladyship with a sigh, looking touchingly at her husband.

"What opportunities for tranquil thought!" I went on.

"Ay, and so forth!" said Mr Stafford gaily. "Listen to another son of peace and solitude, my Lord Roscommon—

Hail, sacred Solitude! from this calm bay
I view the world's tempestuous sea,
And with wise pride despise
All those senseless vanities:
With pity moved for others, cast away
On rocks of hopes and fears, I see them toss'd,
On rocks of folly and of vice I see them lost:
Some, the prevailing malice of the great,
Unhappy men, or adverse fate,
Sunk deep into the gulfs of an afflicted state:
But more, far more, a numberless prodigious train,
Whilst Virtue courts them, but, alas! in vain,
Fly from her kind embracing arms,
Deaf to her fondest call, blind to her greatest charms,
And, sunk in pleasures and in brutish ease,
They, in their shipwreck'd state, themselves obdurate please.
* * * *
Here may I always on this downy grass,
Unknown, unseen, my easy moments pass,
Till with a gentle force, victorious Death
My solitude invade,
And, stopping for a while my breath,
With ease convey me to a *better* shade.*

"*There's* for you, my lady! Well sung, my Lord Roscommon! Beautiful as true!" exclaimed Mr Stafford gaily, as soon as he had concluded repeating the above ode, in his own distinct and beautiful elocution, with real pathos of manner; but his mouth and eye betrayed that his own mind sympathised not with the emotions of the poet, but rather despised the air of inglorious repose they breathed. The tears were in Lady Emma's eyes, as she listened to him! Presently one of his daughters, a fine little girl about six years of age, came sidling and simpering into the room, and made her way to her mother. She was a lively, rosy, arch-eyed little creature, and her father looked fondly at her for a moment, exclaiming, "Well, Eleanor!" and his thoughts had evidently soon passed far away. The conversation turned on Mr Stafford's reckless, absorbing pursuit of politics, which Lady Emma and I deplored, and entreated him to give more of his time and affections to domestic concerns. * * * "You talk to me as if I were dying," said he, rather petulantly; "why should I not pursue my profession—my legitimate profession?—As for your still waters—your pastoral simplicities—your Arcadian bliss—pray what inducements have I to run counter to my own inclinations to cruise what you are pleased to call the stormy sea of politics?" "What inducements?—Charles, Charles, can't you find them *here?*" said his lady, pointing to herself and her daughter. Mr Stafford's eyes filled with tears, even to overflowing, and he grasped her hand with affectionate energy, took his smiling unconscious daughter on his knee, and kissed her with passionate fervour. "*Semel insanivimus omnes*," he muttered to me, a few moments after, as if ashamed of the display he had recently made. For my own part, I saw that he occasionally lost the control over feelings which were, for some reason or other, disturbed and excited. What could possibly have occurred? Strange as it may seem, a thought of the real state of matters, as they will presently be disclosed, never for an instant crossed my mind. I longed—I almost sickened—for the promised opportunity of being alone with him. It was soon afforded me, by the servants appearing at the door, and announcing the carriage.

"Oh, dear, positively prayers will be over!" exclaimed Lady Emma, rising, and looking hurriedly at her watch, "we've quite forgotten church-hours! Do you accompany us, doctor?" said she, looking at me.

"No, Emma," replied Mr Stafford quickly; "you and the family must go alone this morning—I shall stop

* The French Translator has been at the pains of translating the whole of the above poem of Lord Roscommon's, *verbatim et literatim!*

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and keep Dr —— company, and take a walk over the country for once." Lady Emma, with an unsatisfied glance at both of us, withdrew. Mr Stafford immediately proposed a walk; and we were soon on our way to a small Gothic alcove near the water-side.

"Now, doctor, to the point," said he abruptly, as soon as we were seated. "Can I reckon on a *real* friend in you?" scrutinising my features closely.

"Most certainly you may," I replied, with astonishment. "What can I do for you?—Something or other is wrong, I fear! Can *I* do anything for you in any way?"

"Yes," said he deliberately, and looking fixedly at me, as if to mark the effect of his words; "I shall require a proof of your friendship soon; I must have your services this evening—at seven o'clock."

"Gracious Heaven, Mr Stafford!—why—why—is it possible that—do I guess aright?" I stammered almost breathless, and rising from my seat.

"O doctor!—don't be foolish—excuse me—but don't—don't, I beg! Pray, give me your answer! I'm sure you understand my question." Agitation deprived me for a while of utterance.

"I beg an answer, Dr ——," he resumed coldly, "as, if you refuse, I shall be very much inconvenienced. 'Tis but a little affair—a silly business, that circumstances have made inevitable—I'm sure you must have seen a hint at it in the last night's papers. Don't misunderstand me," he proceeded, seeing me continue silent; "I don't wish you to take an active part in the business—but to be on the spot—and, in the event of anything unfortunate happening to me—to hurry home here, and prepare Lady Emma and the family—that is all. Mr G——" (naming a well-known army surgeon) "will attend professionally." I was so confounded with the suddenness of the application, that I could do nothing more than mutter indistinctly my regret at what had happened.

"Well, Doctor ——," he continued in a haughty tone, "I find that, after all, I have been mistaken in my man. I own I did not expect that this—the first favour I have ever asked at your hands, and, possibly, the last—would have been refused. But I must insist on an answer one way or another; you must be aware I've no time to lose."

"Mr Stafford—pardon me—you mistake me! Allow me a word; you cannot have committed yourself rashly in this affair! Consider Lady Emma—your children"——

"I have—I have," he answered, grasping my hand, while his voice faltered; "and I need hardly inform you that it is that consideration only which occasions the little disturbance of manner you may have noticed. But you are a man of the world enough to be aware that I MUST go through with the business. I am not the challenger."

"I asked him for the particulars of the affair. It originated in a biting sarcasm which he had uttered, with reference to a young nobleman, in the House of Commons, on Friday evening, which had been construed into a personal affront, and for which an apology had been demanded—mentioning the alternative, in terms almost approaching to insolence, evidently for the purpose of provoking him into a refusal to retract or apologise.

"It's my firm persuasion that there is a plot among a certain party to destroy me—to remove an obnoxious member from the House—and this is the scheme they have hit upon! I have succeeded, I find, in annoying the —— interest beyond measure; and so they must, at all events, get rid of me! Ay, this *cur* of a lordling it is," he continued with fierce emphasis, "who is to make my sweet wife a widow, and my children orphans—for Lord ——* is notoriously one of the best shots in the country! Poor—poor Emma!" he exclaimed with a sigh, thrusting his hand into his bosom, and looking down dejectedly. We neither of us spoke for some time.

* "Lord *Porden!*"—*French Translator.*



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"Would to Heaven we had never been married!" he resumed. "Poor Lady Emma leads a wretched life of it, I fear! But I honestly warned her that my life would be strewn with thorny cares even to the grave's brink!"

"So you have really pitched upon *this* evening—Sunday evening, for this dreadful business?" I inquired.

"Exactly. We must be on the spot by seven precisely. I say WE, doctor," he continued, laying his hand on mine. I consented to accompany him. "Come now, that's kind! I'll remember you for it. * * It is now nearly half-past twelve," looking at his watch, "and by one, my Lord A——,"* mentioning a well-known nobleman, "is to be here; who is to stand by me on the occasion. I wish he were here; for I've added a codicil to my will, and want you both to witness my signature. * * I look a little fagged—don't I?" he asked with a smile. I told him he certainly looked rather sallow and worn. "How does our friend walk his paces?" he inquired, baring his wrist for me to feel his pulse. The circulation was little, if at all disturbed, and I told him so. "It would not have been very wonderful if it *had*, I think; for I've been up half the night—till nearly five this morning—correcting the two last proof-sheets of my speech on the —— Bill, which ——— is publishing. I think it will read well; at least I hope it will, in common justice to myself, for it was most vilely curtailed and misrepresented by the reporters. By the way—would you believe it?—Sir ———'s† speech that night was nothing but a hundredth hash of mine, which I delivered in the House more than eight years ago!" said he, with an eager and contemptuous air. I made him no reply; for my thoughts were too sadly occupied with the dreadful communication he had recently made me. I abhorred, and do abhor and despise duelling, both in theory and practice; and now to have to be present at one, and one in which my friend—*such* a friend!—was to be a principal. This thought, and a glance at the possible, nay, probable, desolation and broken-heartedness which might follow, was almost too much for me. But I knew Mr Stafford's disposition too well to attempt expostulation—especially in the evidently morbid state of his feelings.

"Come, come, doctor, let's walk a little. Your feelings flag. You might be going to receive *satisfaction* yourself," with a bitter sneer, "instead of seeing it given and taken by others. Come, cheer, cheer up." He put his arm in mine, and led me a few steps across the lawn, by the water-side. "Dear, dear me!" said he with a chagrined air, pulling out his watch hastily, "I wish to Heaven my Lord A—— would make his appearance. I protest her ladyship will have returned from church before we have settled our few matters, unless, by the way, she drives round by Admiral ——'s, as she talked of last night. Oh, my God! think of my leaving her and the girls, with a gay air, as if we parted but for an hour, when it *may* be for ever! And yet what *can* one do?" While he was speaking, my eye caught sight of a servant making his way towards us rapidly through the shrubbery, bearing in his hands a letter, which he put into Mr Stafford's hands, saying, a courier had brought it that moment, and was waiting to take an answer back to town. "Ah—very good—let him wait till I come," said Mr Stafford. "Excuse me, Doctor ——," bursting open the envelope with a little trepidation, and putting it into my hands, while he read the enclosed note. The envelope bore in one corner the name of the premier, and, in the other, the words "private and confidential," and was sealed with the private crest and coronet of the earl.

"Great God!—read it!" exclaimed Mr Stafford, thrusting the note before me, and elevating his eyes and hands despairingly. Much agitated myself at witnessing the effect of the communication on my friend, I took it, and read nearly as follows:—"My dear Stafford—I had late last night

* "Lord *Alcock!*"—*French Translator.*

† "*Lord Williams,*" says the French Translator, instead of Sir ——.

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his Majesty's commands to offer to you the seals of the ——— office, accompanied with the most gracious expressions of consideration for yourself personally, and his conviction that you will discharge the important duties henceforth devolving upon you, with honour to yourself, and advantage to his Majesty's councils. In all which, I need hardly assure you, I most heartily concur. I beg to add, that I shall feel great pride and pleasure in having you for a colleague—and it has not been my fault that such was not the case earlier. May I entreat your answer by the bearer's return, as the state of public affairs will not admit of delay in filling up so important an office? I beg you will believe me, ever yours, most faithfully, ——.

"*Whitehall, Sunday noon,*
12 *o'clock.*"

After hurriedly reading the above, I continued holding the letter in my hands, speechlessly gazing at Mr Stafford. Well might such a bitter balk excite the tumultuous conflict of passions which the varying features of Mr Stafford—now flushed—now pale—too truly evidenced. This dazzling proffer made him only a few hours before his standing the fatal fire of an accomplished duellist! I watched him in silent agony. At length he clasped his hands with passionate energy, and exclaimed—"Oh! madness—madness—madness!—Just within reach of the prize I have run for all my life!" At that instant, a wherry, full of bedizened Londoners, passed close before us, on their way towards Richmond; and I saw by their whispers that they had recognised Mr Stafford. He also saw them, and exclaimed to me in a tone I shall never forget, "Happy, happy fools!" and turned away towards the house. He removed his arm from mine, and stood pondering for a few moments with his eye fixed on the grass.

"Doctor, what's to be DONE?"—he almost shouted, turning suddenly to me, grasping my arm, and staring vacantly into my face. I began to fear lest he should totally lose the command of himself.

"For God's sake, Mr Stafford, be calm!—recollect yourself!—or madness—ruin—I know not what—is before you!" I said, in an earnest imploring tone, seeing his eye still glaring fixedly upon me. At length he succeeded in overmastering his feelings. "Oh!—folly, folly, this! Inevitable!—inevitable!" he exclaimed in a calmer tone. "But the letter must be answered. What *can* I say, doctor?" putting his arm in mine, and walking up to the house rapidly. We made our way to the library, and Mr Stafford sat down before his desk. He opened his portfeuille slowly and thoughtfully. "Of course—decline!" said he, with a profound sigh, turning to me with his pen in his hand.

"No—assuredly, it would be precipitate. Wait for the issue of this sad business. YOU MAY escape."—"No—no—no! My Lord ——— is singularly prompt and decisive in all he does—especially in disposing of his places. I must—I must—ay"—beginning to write—"I must respectfully decline—altogether. But on what grounds? O God! even should I escape to-day, I am ruined for ever in Parliament! What will become of me?" He laid down the pen, and moved his hand rapidly over his face.

"Why—perhaps it would be better. Tell his lordship frankly how you are circumstanced."

"Tut!" he exclaimed, impetuously; "ask him for *peace-officers!* a likely thing." He pressed both his hands on his forehead, leaning on his elbows over the desk. A servant that moment appeared, and said, "Please, sir, the man says he had orders not to wait more than five minutes"——

"Begone! Let him wait, sir!" thundered Mr Stafford—and resumed his pen.

"Can't you throw yourself on his lordship's personal good feeling towards you, and say that such an offer requires consideration—that it must interfere with, and derange, on the instant, many of your political engagements—and that your answer shall be at Whitehall by—say *nine* o'clock this

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evening? So you will gain time at least."

"Good. 'Twill do—a fair plea for time; but I'm afraid!" said he mournfully; and taking his pen he wrote off an answer to that effect. He read it to me, folded it up, sealed it, directed it in his usual bold and flowing hand; I rang for the servant—and in a few moments we saw the courier galloping past the window.

"Now, doctor, isn't this enough to madden me? O God! it's intolerable!" said he, rising and approaching me—"my glorious prospects to be darkened by this speck—this atom of puppyism—of worthlessness"—naming Lord ——, his destined opponent. "Oh—*if* there were—if there *were*" —— he resumed, speaking fiercely through his closed teeth, his eyes glaring downwards, and his hands clenched. He soon relaxed. "Well, well! it can't be helped; 'tis inevitable—*πάντως πίπρωται ταῦτα κοὐκ ἐκφυγεῖται* —I must say with Medea. Ah!—Lord A—— at last," he said, as a gentleman, followed by his groom, rode past the window. In a few moments he entered the library. His stature was lofty, his features commanding, and his bearing fraught with composure and military hauteur. "Ah, Stafford —good morning!" said he, approaching and shaking him warmly by the hand; "upon my soul, I'm sorry for the business I'm come about."

"I can sympathise with you, I think," replied Mr Stafford calmly. "My Lord, allow me—Dr ——." I bowed. "Fully in my confidence—an old friend," he whispered Lord A——, in consequence of his lordship's inquisitive, suspicious glance. * * "Well, you must teach the presumptuous puppy better manners this evening!" said his lordship, adjusting his black stock with an indifferent air!

"Ay!—nothing like a LEADEN LESSON," replied Mr Stafford with a cold smile.

——"For a leaden *head*, too, by ——!" rejoined his lordship quickly. "We shall run you pretty fair through, I think; for we have determined on putting you up at six paces."

"Six paces!—why we shall blow one another to ——!" echoed Mr Stafford, with consternation. "'*Twould* be rather hard to go there in such bad company, I own. Six paces!" continued Mr Stafford; "how *could* you be so absurd!—It will be deliberate murder!"

"Poh, poh!—never a bit of it, my dear fellow—never a bit of it!—I've put many up at that distance—and, believe me, the chances are ten to two that both miss."

"Both miss at six paces?" inquired Mr Stafford with an incredulous smile.

"Ay! both miss, I say; and no wonder either. Such contiguity!—Egad, 'twould make a *statue* nervous!"

"But, A——! have you *really* determined on putting us up at six paces?" again inquired Mr Stafford earnestly.

"Most unquestionably," replied his lordship briskly; adding, rather coldly, "I flatter myself, Stafford, that when a man's *honour* is at stake, six or sixty paces are matters equally indifferent."

"Ay, ay, A——, I daresay," replied Mr Stafford, with a melancholy air; "but 'tis hard to die by the hands of a puppy, and under such circumstances! Did you not meet a man on horseback?"

"Ay, ay," replied his lordship eagerly; "I did—a courier of my Lord ——'s, and thundering townward at a prodigious rate. Any doings there between you and the premier?"

"Read!" said Mr Stafford, putting Lord ——'s letter into his hand. Before his lordship had more than half read it, he let it fall on the table, exclaiming, "Good God! was there ever such an unfortunate thing in the world before!—Ha'n't it really driven you mad, Stafford?"

"No," he replied with a sigh; "the thing must be borne!" Lord A—— walked a few steps about the room thoughtfully, with energetic gestures. "If—if I could but find a pretext—if I *could* but come across the puppy in the interval—I'd give my life to have a shot preparatory with him!" he muttered. Mr Stafford smiled. "While

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I think of it," said he, opening his desk, "here's my will. I wish you and Dr —— to see me sign." We did —and affixed our names.

* * * *

"By the way," said his lordship, suddenly addressing Mr Stafford, who, with his chin resting on his hands, and his features wearing an air of intense thought, had been silent for some minutes, "how do you put off Lady Emma to-day? How do you account for your absence?"

"Why, I've told her we three were engaged to dinner at Sir ——'s," naming a neighbouring baronet. "I'm afraid it will kill Lady Emma if I fall," he faltered, while the tears rushed to his eyes. He stepped towards the decanters, which had, a little while before, been brought in by the servant; and, after asking us to do the same, poured out a glass, and drank it hastily—and another—and another.

"Well, this is one of the saddest affairs, altogether, that I ever knew!" exclaimed his lordship. "Stafford, I feel for you from my heart's core—I do!" he continued, grasping him affectionately by the hand: "here's to your success to-night, and God's blessing to Lady Emma!" Mr Stafford started suddenly from him, and walked to the window, where he stood for a few minutes in silence. "Lady Emma is returning, I see," said he, approaching us. His features exhibited little or no traces of agitation. He poured out another glass of wine, and drank it off at a draught, and had hardly set down the glass before the carriage-steps were heard letting down at the door. Mr Stafford turned to them with an eye of agony as his lady and one of her little girls descended.

"I think we'd perhaps better not join her ladyship before our setting off," said Lord A——, looking anxiously at poor Stafford.

"Oh, but we *will*," said he, leading to the door. He had perfectly recovered his self-possession. I never knew a man that had such remarkable command of face and manner as Mr Stafford. I was amazed at the gay—almost *nonchalant*—air with which he walked up to Lady Emma—asked her about the sermon—whether she had called at Admiral ——'s—and several other such questions.

"Ah! and how is it with you, my little Hebe—eh?" said he, taking the laughing girl into his arms, laughing, tickling and kissing her, with all a father's fondness. *I* saw his heart was swelling within him: and the touching sight brought, with powerful force to my recollection, a similar scene in the *Medea* of Euripides, where the mother is bewailing over the "last smile" of her children.* He succeeded in betraying no painful emotion in his lady's presence; and Lord A—— took good care to engage her in incessant conversation.

"What does your ladyship say to a walk through the grounds?" said he, proffering his arm, which she accepted, and we all walked out together. The day was beautiful, but oppressively sultry, and we turned our steps towards the plantations. Mr Stafford and I walked together, and slipped a little behind for the purpose of conversation. "I sha'n't have much opportunity of speaking with you, doctor," said he, "so I'll say what is uppermost now. Be sure, my dear doctor, to hurry from the field—which is about four miles from my house—to Lady Emma, in the event of my being either killed or wounded, and do what you think best to prepare my wife for the event. I cannot trust her to better, gentler hands than yours—my old, my tried friend!—— You know where my will is—and I've given directions for my funeral."

"O dear, dear Stafford!" I interrupted him, moved almost to tears, "don't speak so hopelessly!"

"O doctor—nonsense! there's no disguising matters from one's-self.

* I shall be pardoned, I am sure, by the classical reader, for reminding him of the exquisite language of the original:—

*Φεῦ! φεῦ! τι προσδέρκεσθέ μ' ὄμμασιν, τέκνα;*
*— τὶ πρόσγελᾶτε τὸν πανύστατον γέλων;*
*αἰ — αἰ! — παιδία γὰρ οἴχεται*
*— ὄμμα φαιδρὸν ὡς ἰδόν τέκνων!*
*οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην!*

EUR. *Med.* 1036–40.

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Is there a chance for me? No; I'm a murdered man; and can you doubt it? Lord —— can do only one thing well in the world, and that is, hit his man at any distance; and then *six paces* off each other! Lord A —— may say what he likes; but I call it murder. However, the absurd customs of society *must* be complied with! —I hope," he added, after a pause, "that when the nine days' wonder of the affair shall have passed off—if I fall—when the press shall cease its lying about it—that my friends will do justice to my memory. God knows, I *really* love my country, and would have served it: it was my ambition to do so; but it's useless talking now! I am excessively vexed that this affair should have occurred before the —— question comes on, in preparation for which I have been toiling incessantly, night and day, for this month past. I know that great expectations"—— At that instant, Lord A—— and Lady Emma met us, and we had no further opportunity of conversing. We returned to lunch after a few minutes' longer walk.

"God bless you, Emma!" said Mr Stafford, nodding, with an affectionate smile, as he took wine with his lady. He betrayed no emotion throughout the time we sat together, but conversed long—and often in a lively strain—on the popular topics of the day. He rang for his valet, and directed him to have his toilet ready, and to order the carriage for four o'clock. He then withdrew, and, in about a quarter of an hour's time, returned, dressed in a blue surtout and white trousers. He was a very handsome, well-made man, and seemed dressed with particular elegance, I thought.

"Upon my honour, Charles, you are in a pretty *dinner*-trim," said Lady Emma; and *all* of you, I protest!" she continued, looking round with surprise at our walking-dress. Mr Stafford told her, with a laugh, that we were going to meet none but bachelors.

"What!—why, where will the Miss ——s be?"

"Ordered out, my lady, for the day," replied Lord A—— with a smile, promptly, lest his friend should hesitate: "'tis to be the model of a divan, I understand!"

"Don't be late, love!" said Lady Emma to her husband, as he was drawing on his gloves; "you know I've little enough of you at all times —don't—don't be late!"

"No—no later than I can help, certainly!" said he, moving to the door.

"Say eleven—will you?—come, for *once!*"

"Well—yes. I WILL return by eleven," he replied pointedly, and I detected a little tremulousness in his tone.

"Papa! papa!" exclaimed his little daughter, running across the hall, as her father was on the carriage steps—"Papa! papa! may I sit up to-night till you come home?" He made no reply, but beckoned us in hurriedly—sat back in his seat—thundered "Drive on, sir!"—and burst into tears.

"O, my dear fellow—Stafford—Stafford! This will never *do*. What will our friends on the ground say?" inquired Lord A——.

"What they like!" replied Mr Stafford sternly, still in tears. He soon recovered himself.

* * After driving some time, "Now, let me give you a bit of advice," said Lord A—— in an earnest tone: "we shall say only one word, by way of signal—'Fire,' and be sure to fire while you are in the act of raising your pistol."

"Oh, yes—yes—yes—I understand"——

"Well, but be *sure;* don't think of pointing first, and then firing—or, by ——, you'll assuredly fire over his head, or fire far on one side. Only recollect to do as I say, and you will take him full in the ribs, or clip him in the neck, or at least wing him."

"My dear fellow, do you take me for a *novice?* Do you forget my affair with ——?" inquired Mr Stafford impatiently.

"I promised to meet G—— about here," said Lord A——, putting his head out of the window. "Egad, if he

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is not punctual, I don't know what we shall do, for he's got my pistol-case. Where—where is he?" he continued, looking up the road. "There!" he exclaimed, catching sight of a horseman riding at a very slow pace. After we had overtaken him, and Lord A—— had taken the pistol-case into the carriage, and Mr Stafford had himself examined the pistols carefully, we rode side by side till we came near the scene of action. During that time, we spoke but little, and that little consisted of the most bitter and sarcastic expressions of Mr Stafford's contempt for his opponent, and regret at the occurrence which had so tantalised him, alluding to Lord ——'s offer of the —— office. About ten minutes to seven we alighted, and gave the coachman orders to remain there till we returned. The evening was lovely—the glare of day "mellowed to that tender light" which characterises a summer evening in the country. As we walked across the fields towards the appointed spot, I felt sick and faint with irrepressible agitation, and Mr G——, the surgeon, with whom I walked, joked with me at my "squeamishness," much in the style of tars with sea-sick passengers. "There's nothing in it—nothing," said he; "they'll take care not to hurt one another. 'Tis a pity, too, that such a man as Mr Stafford should run the risk. What a noise it will make!" I let him talk on, for I could not answer, till we approached the fatal field, which we entered by a gap. Lord A—— got through first. "Punctual, however," said he, looking round at Mr Stafford, who was following. "There they are—just getting over the style. Inimitable coxcomb!"

"Ay, there they are, sure enough," replied he, shading his eyes. "A——, for God's sake, take care not to put me against the sunshine—it will dazzle"——

"Oh, never fear! it will go down before then; 'tis but just above the horizon now." A touching image, I thought! It might be so with Mr Stafford—*his* "sun might go down—*at noon!*"

"Stop, my lord," said Mr Stafford, motioning Lord A—— back, and pressing his hand to his forehead. "A moment—allow me! Let me see—is there anything I've forgot? Oh, I thought there was!" He hurriedly requested Lord A——, after the affair, in the event of its proving bloody, to call on the minister and explain it all. Lord A—— promised to do so. "Ah—here, too," unbuttoning his surtout; "*this* must not be there, I suppose;" and he removed a small gold snuff-box from his right to his left waistcoat-pocket. "Let the blockhead have his full chance."

"Stuff, stuff, Stafford! That's Quixotic!" muttered Lord A——. He was much paler, and more thoughtful than I had seen him all along. All this occurred in much less time than I have taken to tell it. We all passed into the field; and, as we approached, saw Lord —— and his second, who were waiting our arrival. The appearance of the former was that of a handsome fashionable young man, with very light hair, and lightly dressed altogether; and he walked to and fro, switching about a little riding-cane. Mr Stafford released Lord A——, who joined the other second, and commenced the preliminary arrangements.

I never saw a greater contrast than there was between the demeanour of Mr Stafford and his opponent. There stood the former, his hat shading his eyes, his arms folded, eyeing the motions of his antagonist with a look of supreme—of utter contempt; for I saw his compressed and curled upper lip. Lord —— betrayed an anxiety—a visible effort to appear unconcerned. He "overdid it." He was evidently as uneasy in the contiguity of Mr Stafford, as the rabbit shivering under the baleful glare of the rattlesnake's eye. One little circumstance was full of character at that agitating moment. Lord ——, anxious to manifest every appearance of coolness and indifference, seemed bent on demolishing a nettle, or some other prominent weed, and was making repeated strokes at it with the little whip he held. *This*, a few seconds before his life was to be jeopardied! Mr Stafford stood watch-

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ing this puerile feat in the position I have formerly mentioned, and a withering smile stole over his features, while he muttered—if I heard correctly—"Poor boy! poor boy!"

At length, the work of loading being completed, and the distance—six paces—duly stepped out, the duellists walked up to their respective stations. Their proximity was perfectly frightful. The pistols were then placed in their hands, and we stepped to a little distance from them.

"Fire!" said Lord A——; and the word had hardly passed his lips before Lord ——'s ball whizzed close past the ear of Mr Stafford. The latter, who had not even elevated his pistol at the word of command, after eyeing his antagonist for an instant with a scowl of contempt, fired in the air, and then jerked the pistol away towards Lord —— with the distinctly audible words—"Kennel, sir, kennel!" He then walked towards the spot where Mr G—— and I were standing. Would to heaven he had never uttered the words in question! Lord —— had heard them, and followed him, furiously exclaiming, "Do you call *this* satisfaction, sir?" and, through his second, insisted on a second interchange of shots. In vain did Lord A—— vehemently protest that it was contrary to all the laws of duelling, and that he would leave the ground. They were inflexible. Mr Stafford approached Lord A——, and whispered, "For God's sake, A——, don't hesitate. Load—load again! The fool WILL rush on his fate. Put us up again, and see if I fire a second time in the air!" His second slowly and reluctantly assented, and reloaded. Again the hostile couple stood at the same distance from each other, pale with fury; and, at the word of command, both fired, and both fell. At one bound I sprung towards Mr Stafford, almost blind with agitation. Lord A—— had him propped against his knee, and, with his white pocket-handkerchief, was endeavouring to stanch a wound in the right side. Mr Stafford's fire had done terrible execution, for his ball had completely shattered the lower jaw of his opponent, who was borne off the field instantly. Mr Stafford swooned, and was some minutes before he recovered, when he exclaimed feebly, "God forgive me, and be with my poor wife!" We attempted to move him, when he swooned a second time, and we were afraid it was all over with him. Again, however, he recovered, and, opening his eyes, he saw me with my fingers at his pulse. "Oh, doctor, doctor! what did you promise? Remember Lady Emm"—— he could not get out the word. I waited till the surgeon had ascertained generally the nature of the wound, which he presently pronounced not fatal, and assisted in binding it up, and conveying him to the carriage. I then mounted Mr G——'s horse, and hurried on to communicate the dreadful intelligence to Lady Emma. I galloped every step of the way, and found, on my arrival, that her ladyship had, but a few moments before, adjourned to the drawing-room, where she was sitting at coffee. Thither I followed the servant, who announced me. Lady Emma was sitting by the tea-table, and rose on hearing my name. When she saw my agitated manner, the colour suddenly faded from her cheeks. She elevated her arms, as if deprecating my intelligence; and, before I could reach her, had fallen fainting on the floor.

* * * *

I cannot undertake to describe what took place on that dreadful night. All was confusion—agony—despair. Mr Stafford was in a state of insensibility when he arrived at home, and was immediately carried up to bed. The surgeon succeeded in extracting the ball, which had seriously injured the fifth and sixth ribs, but had not penetrated to the lungs. Though the wound was serious, and would require careful and vigilant treatment, there was no ground for apprehending a mortal issue. As for Lord ——, I may anticipate his fate. The wound he had received brought on a lock-jaw, of which he died in less than a week. And THIS is what is called SATISFACTION!

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To return:—All my attention was devoted to poor Lady Emma. She did not even ask to see her husband, or move to leave the drawing-room, after recovering from her swoon. She listened, with apparent calmness, to my account of the transaction, which, the reader may imagine, was as mild and mitigated in its details as possible. As I went on, she became more and more thoughtful, and continued, with her eyes fixed on the floor, motionless and silent. In vain did I attempt to rouse her, by soothing—threats—surprise. She would gaze full at me, and relapse into her former abstracted mood. At length the drawing-room door was opened by some one—who proved to be Lord A——, come to take his leave. Lady Emma sprang from the sofa, burst from my grasp, uttered a long, loud, and frightful peal of laughter, and then came fit after fit of the strongest hysterics I ever saw. * * About midnight, Dr Baillie and Sir —— arrived, and found their patients each insensible, and each in different apartments. Alas! alas! what a dreadful contrast between that hour and the hour of my arrival in the morning! O ambition! O political happiness! —mockery!

Towards morning Lady Emma became calmer, and, under the influence of a pretty powerful dose of laudanum, fell into a sound sleep. I repaired to the bedside of Mr Stafford. He lay asleep, Mr G——, the surgeon, sitting on one side of the bed, and a nurse on the other. Yes, there lay the STATESMAN! his noble features, though overspread with a pallid, a cadaverous hue, still bearing the ineffaceable impress of intellect. There was a loftiness about the ample expanded forehead, and a stern commanding expression about the partially knit eyebrows, and pallid compressed lips, which, even in the absence of the flashing eye, bespoke

——— the great soul,
Like an imprison'd eagle, pent within,
That fain would fly!

"On what a slender thread hangs everything in life!" thought I, as I stood silently at the foot of the bed, gazing on Mr Stafford. To think of a man like Stafford falling by the hand of an insignificant lad of a lordling—a titled bully! Oh, shocking and execrable custom of duelling!—blot on the escutcheon of a civilised people! —which places greatness of every description at the mercy of the mean and worthless; which lyingly pretends to assert a man's honour and atone for insult, by turning the tears of outraged feeling into blood!

About eight o'clock in the morning (Monday), I set off for town, leaving my friend in the skilful hands of Mr G——, and promising to return, if possible, in the evening. About noon, what was my astonishment to hear street-criers yelling everywhere a "full, true, and particular account of the bloody duel fought last night between Mr Stafford and Lord ——!" Curiosity prompted me to purchase the trash. I need hardly say that it was preposterous nonsense. The "duellists," it seemed, "fired *six* shots a-piece"—and what will the reader imagine were the "dying" words of Mr Stafford—according to these precious manufacturers of the marvellous?—"Mr Stafford then raised himself on his second's knee, and, with a loud and solemn voice, said, 'I leave my everlasting hatred to Lord ——, my duty to my king and country —my love to my family—and my precious soul to God!'"

The papers of the day, however, gave a tolerably accurate account of the affair, and unanimously stigmatised the "presumption" of Lord —— in calling out such a man as Mr Stafford—and on such frivolous grounds. My name was, most fortunately, not even alluded to. I was glancing through the columns of the evening ministerial paper, while the servant was saddling the horses for my return to the country, when my eye lit on the following paragraph:—"Latest News. Lord —— is appointed —— Secretary. We understand that Mr Stafford had the refusal of it." Poor Stafford! Lord A—— had called on the minister, late on Sunday evening, and acquainted him with the whole

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affair. "Sorry—very," said the premier. "Rising man that—but we could not wait. Lord —— is to be the man!"

I arrived at Mr Stafford's about nine o'clock, and made my way immediately to his bedroom. Lady Emma, pale and exhausted, sat by his bedside, her eyes swollen with weeping. At my request she presently withdrew, and I took her place at my patient's side. He was not sensible of my presence for some time, but lay with his eyes half open, and in a state of low murmuring delirium. An unfortunate cough of mine, close to his ear, awoke him, and, after gazing steadily at me for nearly a minute, he recognised me and nodded. He seemed going to speak to me, but I laid my finger on my lips to warn him against the effort.

"One word—one only, doctor," he whispered hastily—"Who is the —— Secretary?" "Lord ——," I replied. On hearing the name, he turned his head away from me with an air of intense chagrin, and lay silent for some time. He presently uttered something like the words—"too hot to hold him"—"unseat him"—and apparently fell asleep. I found, from the attendant, that all was going on well, and that Mr Stafford bade fair for a rapid recovery, if he would but keep his mind calm and easy. Fearful lest my presence, in the event of his waking again, might excite him into a talking mood, I slipped silently from the room and betook myself to Lady Emma, who sat awaiting me in her boudoir. I found her in a flood of tears. I did all in my power to soothe her, by reiterating my solemn assurances that Mr Stafford was beyond all danger, and wanted only quiet to recover rapidly.

"Oh, Doctor ——! how could you deceive me so yesterday? You knew all about it! How could you look at my little children, and"—— Sobs choked her utterance. "Well—I suppose you *could* not help it! I don't blame you—but my heart is nearly broken about it! Oh, this *honour*—this *honour!* I always thought Mr Stafford above the foolery of such things!" She paused—I replied not—for I had not a word to say against what she uttered. I thought and felt *with* her.

"I would to Heaven that Mr Stafford would forsake Parliament for ever! These hateful politics! He has no peace or rest by day or night!" continued Lady Emma, passionately. "His nights are constantly turned into day, and his day is ever full of hurry and trouble! Heaven knows, I would consent to be banished from society—to work for my daily bread—I would submit to anything, if I could but prevail on Mr Stafford to return to the bosom of his family! Doctor, my heart's happiness is cankered and gone! Mr Stafford does but *tolerate* me—his heart is not mine—it isn't."—— Again she burst into tears.

"What can your ladyship mean?" I inquired with surprise.

"What I say, doctor," she replied, sobbing. "He is wedded to ambition! ambition alone! Oh! I am often tempted to wish I had never seen or known him! For the future, I shall live trembling from day to day, fearful of the recurrence of such frightful scenes as yesterday; his reason will be failing him—his *reason!*" she repeated with a shudder, "and *then!*" Her emotions once more deprived her of utterance. I felt for her from my very soul! I was addressing some consolatory remark to her, when a gentle tapping was heard at the door. "Come in," said Lady Emma; and Mr Stafford's valet made his appearance, saying, with hurried gestures and grimaces—"Ah, Docteur! Mons. déraisonné—il est fou! Il veut absolument voir Milord ——! Je ne puis lui faire passer cette idée là!"

"What *can* be the matter!" exclaimed Lady Emma, looking at me with alarm.

"Oh, only some little wandering, I dare say; but I'll soon return and report progress!" said I, prevailing on her to wait my return, and hurrying to the sick-chamber. To my surprise and alarm, I found Mr Stafford sitting nearly bolt upright in bed, his eyes directed anxiously to the door.

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"Dr ——," said he, as soon as I had taken my seat beside him, "I insist on seeing Lord ——," naming the prime minister; "I positively insist upon it! Let his lordship be shown up instantly." I implored him to lie down at the peril of his life, and be calm—but he insisted on seeing Lord ——. "He is gone, and left word that he would call at this time to-morrow," said I, hoping to quiet him.

"Indeed? Good of him! What can he want? The office is disposed of. There! there! he has stepped back again! Show him up—show him up! What! insult the King's Prime Minister? Show him up, Louis," addressing his valet, adding drowsily, in a fainter tone, "and the members—the members—the—the—who paired off—who pair"—he sank gradually down on the pillow, the perspiration burst forth, and he fell asleep. Finding he slept on tranquilly and soundly, I once more left him, and having explained it to Lady Emma, bade her good evening, and returned to town. The surgeon who was in constant attendance on him, called at my house during the afternoon of the following day, and gave me so good an account of him that I did not think it necessary to go down till the day after, as I had seriously broken in upon my own practice. When I next saw him he was mending rapidly. He even persuaded me into allowing him to have the daily papers read to him—a circumstance I much regretted after I left him, and suddenly recollected how often the public prints made allusions to him—some of them not very kindly or complimentary. But there was no resisting his importunity. He had a wonderful wheedling way with him.

Two days after, he got me to consent to his receiving the visits of his political friends; and really the renewal of his accustomed stimulus conduced materially to hasten his recovery.

Scarcely six weeks from the day of the duel was this indefatigable and ardent spirit, Mr Stafford, on his legs in the House of Commons, electrifying it and the nation at large, by a speech of the most overwhelming power and splendour! He flung his scorching sarcasms mercilessly at the astounded Opposition, especially at those who had contrived to render themselves in any way prominent in their opposition to his policy *during his absence!* By an artful manœuvre of rhetoric—a skilful allusion to "recent unhappy circumstances"—he carried the House with him, from the very commencement, enthusiastically, to the end, and was at last obliged to pause almost every other minute, that the cheering might subside. The unfortunate nobleman who had stepped into the shoes which had been first placed at Mr Stafford's feet—so to speak—came in for the cream of the whole! A ridiculous figure he cut! Jokes, sneers, lampoons, fell upon him like a shower of missiles on a man in the pillory. He was a fat man, and sat perspiring under it. The instant Mr Stafford sat down, this unlucky personage arose to reply. His odd and angry gesticulations, as he vainly attempted to make himself heard amidst incessant shouts of laughter, served to clinch the nail which had been fixed by Mr Stafford; and the indignant senator presently left the House. Another—and another—and another of the singed ones, arose and "followed on the same side;" but to no purpose. It was in vain to buffet against the spring-tide of favour which had set in to Mr Stafford! That night will not be forgotten by either his friends or foes. He gained his point!—within a fortnight he had ousted his rival, and was gazetted —— Secretary! The effort he made, however, on the occasion last alluded to, brought him again under my hands for several days. Indeed, I never had such an intractable patient! He could not be prevailed on to show any mercy to his constitution—he would not give nature fair play. Night and day—morning, noon, evening—spring, summer, autumn, winter—found him toiling on the tempestuous ocean of politics, his mind ever laden with the most harassing and exhausting cares. The eminent situation he filled, brought him, of course, an immense

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accession of cares and anxieties. He was virtually the leader of the House of Commons; and, though his exquisite tact and talent secured to himself personally the applause and admiration of all parties, the government to which he belonged was beginning to disclose symptoms of disunion and disorganisation, at a time when public affairs were becoming every hour more and more involved—our domestic and foreign policy perplexed—the latter almost inextricably—every day assuming a new and different aspect, through the operation of the great events incessantly transpiring on the Continent. The national confidence began rapidly to ebb away from the ministers, and symptoms of a most startling character appeared in different parts of the country. The House of Commons—the pulse of popular feeling—began to beat irregularly—now intermitting—now with feverish strength and rapidity—clearly indicating that the circulation was disordered. Nearly the whole of the newspapers turned against the ministry, and assailed them with the bitterest and foulest obloquy. Night after night, poor Mr Stafford talked himself hoarse, feeling that he was the acknowledged mouthpiece of the ministry; but in vain. Ministers were perpetually left in miserable minorities; they were beaten at every point. Their ranks presented the appearance of a straggling disbanded army; those of the Opposition hung together like a shipwrecked crew clinging to the last fragments of their wreck. Can the consequences be wondered at?

At length came the Budget—word of awful omen to many a quaking ministry! In vain were the splendid powers of Mr Stafford put into requisition. In vain did his masterly mind fling light and order over his sombrous chaotic subject, and simplify and make clear to the whole country, the, till then, dreary jargon and mysticism of financial technicalities. In vain, in vain did he display the sweetness of Cicero, the thunder of Demosthenes. The leader of the Opposition rose, and coolly turned all he had said into ridicule; one of his squad then started to his feet, and made out poor Mr Stafford to be a sort of ministerial swindler; and the rest cunningly gave the cue to the country, and raised up in every quarter clamorous dissatisfaction. Poor Stafford began to look haggard and wasted; and the papers said he stalked into the House, night after night, like a spectre. The hour of the ministry was come. They were beaten on the first item, in the committee of supply. Mr Stafford resigned, in disgust and indignation; and that broke up the government.

I saw him the morning after he had formally tendered his resignation, and given up the papers, &c., of office. He was pitifully emaciated. The fire of his eye was quenched, his sonorous voice broken. I could scarcely repress a tear, as I gazed at his sallow, haggard features, and his languid limbs drawn together on his library sofa.

"Doctor—my friend! This frightful session has killed me, I'm afraid!" said he. "I feel equally wasted in body and mind. I loathe life—everything!"

"I don't think you've been fairly dealt with! You've been crippled—shackled"——

"Yes—cursed—cursed—cursed in my colleagues," he interrupted me, with eager bitterness; it is *their* execrable little-mindedness and bigotry that have concentrated on us the hatred of the nation. As for myself, I am sacrificed, and to no purpose. I feel I cannot long survive it; for I am withered, root and branch—withered!"

"Be persuaded, Mr Stafford," said I gently, "to withdraw for a while and recruit."

"Oh, ay, ay—any whither—any whither—as far off as possible from London—that's all. God pity the man that holds office in these times! The talents of half the angels in heaven wouldn't avail him! Doctor, I rave. Forgive me—I'm in a morbid, nay, almost rabid mood of mind. Foiled at every point—others robbing me of the credit of my labours—sneered at by fools—trampled on by the aristocracy—oh! tut, tut, tut—he on it all!"

* * * *

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"Have you seen the morning papers, Mr Stafford?"

"Not I, indeed. Sick of their cant—lies—tergiversation—scurrility. I've laid an embargo on them all. I won't let one come to my house for a fortnight. 'Tis adding fuel to the fire that is consuming me."

"Ah, but they represent the nation as calling loudly for your reinstatement in office."

"Faugh—let it call! Let them lie on! I've done with them—for the present, at least."

The servant brought up the cards of several of his late colleagues. "Not at home, sirrah!—Harkee—ill—ill," thundered his master. I sat with him nearly an hour longer. Oh, what gall and bitterness tinctured every word he uttered! How this chafed and fretted spirit spurned at sympathy, and despised—even acquiescence! He complained heavily of perfidy and ingratitude on the part of many members of the House of Commons; and expressed his solemn determination—should he ever return to power—to visit them with his signal vengeance. His eyes flashed fire as he recounted the instance of one well-known individual, whom he had paid heavily beforehand for his vote, by a sinecure, and by whom he was, after all, unblushingly "jockeyed,"* on the score of the salary being a few pounds per annum less than had been calculated on! "Oh, believe me," he continued, "of all knavish trafficking, there is none like your political trafficking; of all swindlers, your political swindler is the vilest." Before I next saw him, the new ministry had been named, some of the leading members of which were among Mr Stafford's bitterest and most contemptuous enemies, and had spontaneously pledged themselves to act diametrically opposite to the policy he had adopted. This news was too much for him; and, full of unutterable fury and chagrin, he hastily left town, and, with all his family, betook himself, for an indefinite period, to a distant part of England. I devoutly hoped that he had now had his surfeit of politics, and would henceforth seek repose in the domestic circle. Lady Emma participated anxiously in that wish; she doated on her husband more fondly than ever; and her faded beauty touchingly told with what deep devotion she had identified herself with her husband's interests.

As I am not writing a *life* of Mr Stafford, I must leap over a further interval of twelve anxious and agitating years. He returned to Parliament, and, for several sessions, shone brilliantly as the leader of the Opposition. Being freed from the trammels of office, his spirits resumed their wonted elasticity, and his health became firmer than it had been for years; so that there was little necessity for my visiting him on any other footing than that of friendship.

A close observer could not fail to detect the *system* of Mr Stafford's parliamentary tactics. He subordinated everything to accomplish the great purpose of his life. He took every possible opportunity, in eloquent and brilliant speeches, of familiarising Parliament, and the country at large, with his own principles; dexterously contrasting with them the narrow and inconsistent policy of his opponents. He felt that he was daily increasing the number of his partisans, both in and out of the House—and securing a prospect of his speedy return to permanent power. I one day mentioned this feature, and told him I admired the way in which he gradually *insinuated* himself into the confidence of the country.

"Aha, doctor!"—he replied briskly—"to borrow one of your own terms—I'm *vaccinating* the nation!"

*July* —, 18—.—The star of Stafford again Lord of the Ascendant! This day have the seals of the —— office been intrusted to my gifted friend, Stafford, amid the thunders of the Commons, and the universal gratulations of the country. He is virtually

* "*Jockeying*—terme politique emprunté à l'argot spécial dont se servent les habitués des courses de chevaux et les maquignons." —*French Translator.*

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the leader of the cabinet, and has it "all his own way" with the House. Every appearance he makes there is the signal for the perfect tempest of applause—with, however, a few lightning gleams of inveterate hostility. His course is full of dazzling dangers. There are breakers ahead—he must tack about incessantly amid shoals and quicksands. God help him, and give him calmness and self-possession—or he is lost!

I suppose there will be no getting near him, at least to such an insignificant person as myself—unless he should unhappily require my professional services. How my heart beats when I hear it said in society, that he seems to feel most acutely the attacks incessantly made on him—and appears ill every day! Poor Stafford! I wonder how Lady Emma bears all this!

I hear everywhere, that a tremendous opposition is organising, countenanced in very high quarters, and that he will have hard work to maintain his ground. He is paramount at present, and laughs his enemies to scorn! His name, coupled with almost idolatrous expressions of homage, is in every one's mouth of the *varium et mutabile semper!* His pictures are in every shop window; dinners are given him every week; addresses forwarded from all parts of the country; the freedom of large cities and corporations voted him; in short, there is scarcely anything said or done in public, but Mr Stafford's name is coupled with it.

*March* —, 18—.—Poor Stafford, baited incessantly in the House, night after night. Can he stand? everybody is asking. He has commenced the session swimmingly—as the phrase is. Lady Emma, whom I accidentally met to-day at the house of a patient—herself full of feverish excitement—gives me a sad account of Mr Stafford. Restless nights—incessant sleep-talking—continual indisposition—loss of appetite!

Oh, the pleasures of politics, the sweets of ambition!

*Saturday.*—A strange hint in one of the papers to-day about Mr Stafford's unaccountable freaks in the House, and treatment of various members. What *can* it mean? A fearful suspicion glanced across my mind—Heaven grant that it may be groundless!—on coupling with this dark newspaper hint an occurrence which took place some short time ago. It was this: Lady Amelia —— was suddenly taken ill at a ball given by the Duke of ——, and I was called in to attend her. She had swooned in the midst of the dance, and continued hysterical for some time after her removal home. I asked her what had occasioned it all—and she told me that she happened to be passing, in the dance, a part of the room where Mr Stafford stood, who had looked in for a few minutes to speak to the Marquis of ——. "He was standing in a thoughtful attitude," she continued, "and, somehow or another, I attracted his attention in passing, and he gave me one of the most fiendish scowls, accompanied with a frightful glare of the eye, I ever encountered. It passed from his face in an instant, and was succeeded by a smile, as he nodded repeatedly to persons who saluted him. The look he gave me haunted me, and, added to the exhaustion I felt from the heat of the room, occasioned my swooning." Though I felt faint at heart while listening to her, I laughed it off, and said it must have been fancy. "No, no, doctor, it was not," she replied, "for the Marchioness of —— saw it too, and no later than this very morning, when she called, asked me if I had affronted Mr Stafford."

Could it be so? Was this "look" really a transient ghastly out-flashing of insanity? Was his great mind beginning to stagger under the mighty burden it bore? The thought agitated me beyond measure. When I coupled the incident in question with the mysterious hint in the daily paper, my fears were awfully corroborated. I resolved to call upon Mr Stafford that very evening. I was at his house about eight o'clock, but found he had left a little while before for Windsor. The next morning, however—Sunday—his

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servant brought me word that Mr Stafford would be glad to see me between eight and ten o'clock in the evening. Thither, therefore, I repaired about half-past eight. On sending up my name, his private secretary came down stairs, and conducted me to the minister's library—a spacious and richly furnished room. Statues stood in the window-places, and busts of British statesmen in the four corners. The sides were lined with book-shelves, filled with elegantly bound volumes; and a large table in the middle of the room was covered with tape-tied packets, opened and unopened letters, &c. A large bronze lamp was suspended from the ceiling, and threw a peculiarly rich and mellow light over the whole—and especially the figure of Mr Stafford, who, in his long crimson silk dressing-gown, was walking rapidly to and fro, with his arms folded on his breast. The first glance showed me that he was labouring under high excitement. His face was pale, and his brilliant eyes glanced restlessly from beneath his intensely knit brows.

"My dear doctor, an age since I saw you! Here I am, overwhelmed, you see, as usual!" said he, cordially taking me by the hand, and leading me to a seat. "My dear sir, you give yourself no rest—you are actually—you are *rapidly* destroying yourself!" said I, after he had, in his own brief, energetic, and pointed language, described a train of symptoms bordering on those of brain-fever. He had, unknown to any one, latterly taken to opium, which he swallowed by stealth, in large quantities, on retiring to bed; and I need hardly say how that of itself was sufficient to derange the functions both of body and mind. He had lost his appetite, and felt consciously sinking every day into a state of the utmost languor and exhaustion—so much so, that he was reluctant often to rise and dress, or go out. His temper, he said, began to fail him, and he grew fretful and irritable with everybody, and on every occasion. "Doctor, doctor! I don't know whether you'll understand me or not—but everything GLARES at me!" said he. "Every object grows suddenly invested with personality—animation; I can't bear to look at them! I am oppressed, I breathe a rarefied atmosphere!"—"Your nervous system is disturbed, Mr Stafford."—"I live in a dim dream, with only occasional intervals of real consciousness. Everything is false and exaggerated about me. I see, feel, think, through a magnifying medium; in a word, I'm in a strange, unaccountable, terrible state."

"Can you wonder at it, even if it were worse?" said I, expostulating vehemently with him on his incessant, unmitigating application to public business. "Believe me," I concluded with energy, "you must lie by, or be laid by."

"Ah—good, that—terse! But what's to be done? Must I resign? Must public business stand still in the middle of the session! I've made my bed, and must lie on it."

I really was at a loss what to say. He could not bear "preaching" or "prosing," or anything approaching to it. I suffered him to go on as he would—detailing more and more symptoms like those above mentioned; clearly enough disclosing to my reluctant eyes, reason holding her reins loosely, unsteadily.

"I can't account for it, doctor; but I feel sudden fits of wildness sometimes—but for a moment, however—a second!—O, my Creator! I hope all is yet sound *here, here!*" said he, pressing his hand against his forehead. He rose, and walked rapidly to and fro. "Excuse me, doctor, I *cannot* sit still!" said he. * * "Have I not enough to upset me?—Only listen to a tithe of my troubles, now!—After paying almost servile court to a parcel of Parliamentary puppies, ever since the commencement of the session, to secure their votes on the —— Bill; having the boobies here to dine with me, and then dining with them, week after week; sitting down gaily with fellows whom I utterly, unutterably despise—every one of the pack suddenly turned tail on me—stole, stole, stole away—every one—and left me in a ridiculous minority of 43!" I said it was a sample of the annoyances inseparable

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from office. "Ay, ay, ay!" he replied with impetuous bitterness, increasing the pace at which he was walking. "Why, *why* is it, that public men have no principle, no feeling, no gratitude, no sympathy?" He paused. I said, mildly, that I hoped the throng of the session was nearly got through, that his embarrassments would diminish, and he would have some leisure on his hands.

"Oh, no, no, no!—my difficulties and perplexities increase and thicken on every side! Great heavens! how are we to get on? All the motions of government are impeded; we are hemmed in—blocked up on every side—the state vessel is surrounded with closing, crashing icebergs! I think I must quit the helm! Look here, for instance: after ransacking all the arts and resources of diplomacy, I had, with infinite difficulty, succeeded in devising a scheme for adjusting our —— differences. Several of the Continental powers have acquiesced; all was going on well; when, this very morning, comes a courier to Downing Street, bearing a civil hint from the Austrian cabinet, that, if I persevered with my project, such a procedure would be considered equivalent to a declaration of war! So *there* we are at a dead stand! 'Tis all that execrable Metternich! Subtle devil! *He's* at the bottom of all the disturbances in Europe! Again—here, at home, we are all on our backs! I stand pledged to the —— Bill. I will, and must go through with it. My consistency, popularity, place—all are at stake! I'm *bound* to carry it! and only yesterday the ——, and ——, and —— families—'gad! half the upper House—have given me to understand I must give up them or the —— Bill! And then we are all at daggers-drawn among ourselves—a cabinet-council like a cockpit, —— and —— eternally bickering! And again: last night his Majesty behaved with marked coolness and hauteur: and, while sipping his claret, told me, with stern *sang-froid*, that HIS consent to the —— Bill was 'utterly out of the question.' I must throw overboard the ——, a measure that I have more at heart than any other! It is whispered that —— is determined to draw me into a duel; and, as if all this were not enough, I am perpetually receiving threats of assassination; and, in fact, a bullet hissed close past my hat the other day, while on horseback, on my way to ——! I can't make the thing public—'tis impossible; and perhaps the very next hour I move out, I may be shot through the heart! O God! *what* is to become of me? Would to heaven I had refused the seals of the —— office! Doctor, do you think—the nonsense of medicine apart—do you think you can do anything for me? Anything to quiet the system—to cool the brain? Would bleeding do? —Bathing?—What? But mind I've not much time for physic; I'm to open the —— question to-morrow night; and then every hour to dictate fifteen or twenty letters In a word"——

"Lord ——,* sir," said the servant, appearing at the door.

"Ah, execrable coxcomb!" he muttered to me. "I know what he is come about—he has badgered me incessantly for the last six weeks! I won't see him. Not at home!" he called out to the servant. He paused. "Stay, sirrah!—beg his lordship to walk up-stairs." Then to me—"The man can command his two brothers' votes—I must have them to-morrow night. Doctor, we must part"—hearing approaching footsteps. "I've been raving like a madman, I fear—but not a word to any one breathing! Ah, my lord! good-evening—good-evening!" said he with a gaiety and briskness of tone and manner that utterly confounded me—walking and meeting his visitor half-way, and shaking him by the hands. Poor Stafford! I returned to my own quiet home, and devoutly thanked God, who had shut *me* out from such splendid misery as I witnessed in the Right Honourable Charles Stafford.

*Tuesday.*—Poor Stafford spoke splendidly in the House, last night, for up-

* "Le Colonel *O'Morven*," says the French Translator.

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wards of three hours; and, at the bottom of the reported speech, a note was added, informing the reader, that "Mr Stafford was looking better than they had seen him for some months, and seemed to enjoy excellent spirits." How little did he who penned that note suspect the true state of matters—that Mr Stafford owed his "better looks" and "excellent spirits" to an intoxicating draught of raw brandy, which alone enabled him to face the House! I read his speech with agonising interest; it was full of flashing fancy, and powerful argumentative eloquence, and breathed throughout a buoyant, elastic spirit, which nothing seemed capable of overpowering or depressing. But Mr Stafford might have saved his trouble and anxiety—for he was worsted, and his bill lost by an overwhelming majority! Oh! could his relentless opponents have seen but a glimpse of what I had seen, they would have spared their noble victim the sneers and railleries with which they pelted him throughout the evening.

*Friday.*—I this afternoon had an opportunity of conversing confidentially with Mr Stafford's private secretary, who corroborated my worst fears, by communicating his own, and their reasons, amounting to infallible evidence, that Mr Stafford was beginning to give forth scintillations of *madness*. He would sometimes totally lose his recollection of what he had done during the day, and dictate three answers to the same letter. He would, at the public office, sometimes enter into a strain of conversation with his astounded underlings, so absurd and imprudent—disclosing the profoundest secrets of state—as must have inevitably and instantly ruined him, had he not been surrounded by those who were personally attached to him. Mr ——— communicated various other little symptoms of the same kind. Mr Stafford was once on his way down to the House in his dressing-gown, and could be persuaded with the utmost difficulty only to return and change it. He would sometimes go down to his country house, and receive his lady and children with such an extravagant—such a frantic—display of spirit and gaiety, as at first delighted, then surprised, and finally alarmed Lady Emma into a horrid suspicion of the real state of her husband's mind.

I was surprised early one morning by his coachman's calling at my house, and desiring to see me alone; and, when he was shown into my presence, with a flurried manner, many apologies for his "boldness," and entreaties—somewhat Hibernian, to be sure, in the wording—that I "would *take no notice whatever* of what he said," he told me that his master's conduct had latterly been "very odd and queer-like." That, on getting into his carriage, on his return from the House, Mr Stafford would direct him to drive five or six miles into the country, at the top of his speed—then back again—then to some distant part of London—without once alighting, and with no apparent object; so that it was sometimes five or six, or even seven o'clock in the morning before they got home! "Last night, sir," he added, "master did som'mut uncommon 'stroardinary: he told me to drive to Greenwich; and, when I gets there, he bids me pull up at the ———, and get him a draught of ale—and then he drinks a sup, and tells me and John to finish it, and then turn the horses' heads back again for town!" I gave the man half-a-guinea, and solemnly enjoined him to keep what he had told me a profound secret.

What was to be done?—what steps could we take?—how deal with such a public man as Mr Stafford? I felt myself in a fearful dilemma. Should I communicate candidly with Lady Emma? I thought it better, on the whole, to wait a little longer; and was delighted to find that, as public business slackened a little, and Mr Stafford carried several favourite measures very successfully, and with comparatively little effort, he intermitted his attention to business, and was per-



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suaded into spending the recess at the house of one of his relatives, a score or two miles from town, whose enchanting house and grounds, and magnificent hospitalities, served to occupy Mr Stafford's mind with bustling and pleasurable thoughts. Such a fortnight's interval did wonders for him. Lady Emma, whom I had requested to write frequently to me about him, represented things more and more cheerfully in every succeeding letter—saying, that the "distressing *flightiness*," * which Mr Stafford had occasionally evinced in town, had totally disappeared; that every body at —— House was astonished at the elasticity and joyousness of his spirits, and the energy, almost amounting to enthusiasm, with which he entered into the glittering gaieties and festivities that were going on around him. "He was the life and soul of the party." He seemed determined to banish business from his thoughts, at least for a while; and when a chance allusion was made to it, would put it off gaily with—"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." All this filled me with consolation. I dismissed the apprehensions which had latterly harassed my mind concerning him, and heartily thanked God that Mr Stafford's splendid powers seemed likely to be yet long spared to the country—that the hovering fiend was beaten off from his victim—might it be for ever!

The House at length resumed; Mr Stafford returned to town, and all his weighty cares again gathered around him. Hardly a few days had elapsed before he delivered one of the longest, calmest, most argumentative speeches which had ever fallen from him. Indeed, it began to be commonly remarked, that all he said in the House wore a matter-of-fact, business-like air, which nobody could have expected from him. All this was encouraging. The measure which he brought forward in the speech last alluded to, was hotly contested, inch by inch, in the House, and at last, contrary even to his own expectations, carried, though by an inconsiderable majority. All his friends congratulated him on his triumph.

"Yes, I HAVE triumphed at last," he said emphatically, as he left the House. He went home late at night, and alarmed, confounded his domestics, by calling them all up, and—it is lamentable to have to record such things of such a man—insisting on their *illuminating* the house—candles in every window—in front and behind! It was fortunate that Lady Emma and her family had not yet returned from —— House, to witness this unequivocal indication of returning insanity. He himself personally assisted at the ridiculous task of lighting the candles, and putting them in the windows; and, when it was completed, actually harangued the assembled servants on the signal triumph he and the country had obtained that night in the House of Commons, and concluded by ordering them to extinguish the lights, and adjourn to the kitchen to supper, when he would presently join them, and give them a dozen of wine! He was as good as his word: yes, Mr Stafford sat at the head of his confounded servants—few in number on account of the family's absence—and engaged in the most uproarious hilarity! Fortunately, most fortunately, his conduct was unhesitatingly attributed to intoxication—in which condition he was really carried to bed at an advanced hour in the morning, by those whom nothing but their bashful fears had saved from being similarly overcome by the wine they had been drinking. All this was told me by the coachman, who had communicated with me formerly—and with tears, for he was an old and faithful servant. He assiduously kept up among his fellow-servants the notion that their master's drunkenness was the cause of his extraordinary behaviour.

I called on him the day after, and found him sitting in his library, dictating to his secretary, whom he directed to withdraw as soon as I entered. He then drew his chair close to mine, and burst into tears.

* "Les Anglais ont le mot '*flightiness*,' fuite, légèreté de l'esprit: expression très remarquable dans sa justesse, et sans équivalent en Français."—*French Translator.*

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"Doctor, would you believe it," said he, "I was horridly drunk last night—I can't imagine how—and am sure I did something or other very absurd among the servants. I dare not, of course, *ask* any of them—and am positively ashamed to look even my valet in the face!"

"Poh, poh—*Semel insanivimus omnes*," I stammered, attempting to smile, scarcely knowing what to say.

"Don't—don't desert me, doctor!" he sobbed, clasping my hand, and looking sorrowfully in my face—"Don't *you* desert me, my tried friend. Everybody is forsaking me! The King hates me—the Commons despise me—the people would have my blood, if they dared! And yet why?—What have I done? God knows, I have done everything for the best—indeed, indeed I have!" he continued, grasping my hand in silence.

"There's a terrible plot hatching against me!—Hush!" He rose and bolted the door. "Did you see that fellow whom I ordered out on your entrance?"—naming his private secretary—"Well, that infamous fellow thinks he is to succeed me in my office, and has actually gained over the King and several of the aristocracy to his interest!"

"Nonsense—nonsense—stuff!—You have *wine* in your head, Mr Stafford," said I angrily, trying to choke down my emotions.

"No, no—sober enough now, Doctor ——. I'll tell you what (albeit unused to the melting mood) has thus overcome me: Lady Emma favours the scoundrel! They correspond! My children, even, are gained over!—But Emma, my wife, my love, who could have thought it!" * * I succeeded in calming him, and he began to converse on different subjects, although the fiend was manifest again. "Doctor ——, I'll intrust you with a secret—a state secret! You must know that I have long entertained the idea of uniting all the European states into one vast republic, and have at last arranged a scheme which will, I think, be unhesitatingly adopted. I have written to Prince —— on the subject, and expect his answer soon! Isn't it a grand thought!" I assented, of course. "It will emblazon my name in the annals of eternity, beyond all Roman and all Grecian fame," he continued, waving his hand oratorically; "but I've been—yes, yes—premature!—My secret is safe with you, Doctor ——?"

"Oh, certainly!" I replied, with a melancholy air, uttering a deep sigh.

"But now to business. I'll tell you why I've sent for you." I had called unasked, as the reader will recollect. "I'll tell you," he continued, taking my hand affectionately:—"Dr ——, I have known you now for many years, ever since we were at Cambridge together" (my heart ached at the recollection), "and we have been good friends ever since. I have noticed that you have never asked a favour from me since I knew you. Every one else has teased me—but I have never had a request preferred me from you, my dear friend." He burst into tears, mine very nearly overflowing. There was no longer any doubt that Mr Stafford—the great, the gifted Mr Stafford—was sitting before me in a state of idiocy!—of MADNESS! I felt faint and sick as he proceeded. "Well, I thank God I have it now in my power to reward you—to offer you something that will fully show the love I bear you, and my unlimited confidence in your talents and integrity. I have determined to recall our ambassador at the Court of ——, and shall supply his place"—he looked at me with a good-natured smile—"by my friend, Dr ——!" He leaned back in his chair, and eyed me with a triumphant, a gratified air, evidently preparing himself to be overwhelmed with my thanks. In one instant, however, "a change came o'er the aspect of his dream." His features grew suddenly disturbed, now flushed, now pale; his manner grew restless and embarrassed; and I felt convinced that a lucid interval had occurred—that a consciousness of his having been either saying or doing something very absurd, had that instant flashed across his mind! "Ah, I see, Dr

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——," he resumed, in an altered tone, speaking hesitatingly, while a vivid glance shot from his eye into my very soul, as though he would see whether I had detected the process of thought which had passed through his mind—"you look surprised—ha, ha!—and well you may! But now I'll explain the riddle. You must know that Lord —— is expecting to be our new ambassador, and, in fact, I *must* offer it him; but—but—I wish to pique him into declining it, when I'll take offence—by—telling him—hinting carelessly, that one of my friends had the prior refusal of it!"

Did not the promptitude and plausibility of this pretext savour of madness? He hinted, soon after, that he had much business in hand, and I withdrew. I fell back in my carriage, and resigned myself to bitter and agonising reflections on the scene I had just quitted. What was to be done? Mr Stafford, by some extravagant act, might commit himself frightfully with public affairs.

Lady Emma, painful as the task was, must be written to. Measures MUST now be had recourse to. The case admitted of no further doubt. Yes, this great, this unfortunate man, must be put into constraint, and that immediately. In the tumult of my thoughts, I scarcely knew what to decide on; but, at last, I ordered the man to drive to the houses of Sir ——, and Dr ——, and consult with them on the proper course to be pursued.

* * * *

Oh, God!—Oh, horror!—Oh, my unhappy soul!—Despair! Hark!—what do I hear?—Do I hear aright——

* * * *

Have I seen aright—or is it all a dream?—Shall I awake to-morrow, and find it false?*

* The following is the concluding note of the French Translator, which is here copied *verbatim*:—

"NOTE DU TRAD.—La première partie de cette esquisse si touchante semble se rapporter à *M. Canning;* la dernière à Lord Castlereagh. Quel que soit au surplus 'l'homme politique,' dont l'auteur de ces souvenirs a voulu parler, nous ne doubtons pas de la vérité de son récit. Ces articles, dont nous publierons la suite, ont excité de nombreuses réclamations en Angleterre. Plus d'une famille s'est plainte de l'indiscrétion de l'auteur. On a prétendu qu'en trahissant les mystères de la vie privée que sa pratique lui a fait connaître, il avait violé les lois imposées par la morale, *la religion du medicin.* Les couleurs employées par l'écrivain sont d'ailleurs d'une réalité frappante. CHATHAM est mort, éxténué par ses travaux parliamentaires; il est tombé sans connaissance en prononçant son dernier discours à la Chambre des Lords. SHERIDAN et BURKE avaient l'intelligence affaiblie quand ils ont expiré. CASTLEREAGH et SAMUEL ROMILLY se sont donnés la mort. CANNING a péri dévoré par les anxiétés d'homme d'état."

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# CHAPTER XX.

## A SLIGHT COLD.

CONSIDER "a slight cold" to be in the nature of a chill, caught by a sudden contact with your grave; or as occasioned by the damp finger of death laid upon you, as it were, to mark you for HIS, in passing to the more immediate object of his commission. Let this be called croaking, and laughed at as such, by those who are "awearied of the painful round of life," and are on the look-out for their dismissal from it; but be learnt off by heart, and remembered as having the force and truth of gospel, by all those who would "measure out their span upon the earth," and are conscious of any constitutional flaw or feebleness; who are distinguished by any such tendency death-ward, as long necks—narrow chicken chests—very fair complexions—exquisite sympathy with atmospheric variations; or, in short, exhibit any symptoms of an asthmatic or consumptive character—IF they choose to NEGLECT A SLIGHT COLD.

Let not those complain of being bitten by a reptile, which they have cherished to maturity in their very bosoms, when they might have crushed it in the egg! Now, if we call "a slight cold" the egg,* and pleurisy—inflammation of the lungs—asthma—CONSUMPTION, the venomous reptile—the matter will be no more than correctly figured. There are many ways in which this "egg" may be deposited and hatched. Going suddenly, slightly clad, from a heated into a cold atmosphere, especially if you can contrive to be in a state of perspiration—sitting or standing in a *draught*, however slight—it is the breath of death, reader, and laden with the vapours of the grave! Lying in damp beds, for there his cold arms shall embrace you—continuing in wet clothing, and neglecting wet feet—these, and a hundred others, are some of the ways in which you may slowly, imperceptibly, but surely, cherish the creature that shall at last creep inextricably inwards, and lie coiled about your very vitals. Once more, again—again—again—I would say, ATTEND to this, all ye who think it a small matter to—NEGLECT A SLIGHT COLD!

So many painful—I may say dreadful illustrations of the truth of the above remarks, are strewn over the pages of my Diary, that I scarcely know which of them to select. The following melancholy "instance" will, I hope, prove as impressive, as I think it interesting.

Captain C—— had served in the Peninsular campaigns with distinguished merit; and, on the return of the British army, sold out, and determined to enjoy in private life an ample fortune bequeathed him by a distant relative. At the period I am speaking of, he was in his twenty-ninth or thirtieth year; and, in person, one of the very finest men I ever saw in my life. There was an air of ease and frankness about his demeanour, dashed with a little pensiveness, which captivated everybody with whom he conversed—but the ladies especially. It seemed the natural effect produced on a bold but feeling heart, by frequent scenes of sorrow. Is not such a one formed to win over the heart of woman? Indeed, it seemed so: for, at the period I am speaking of, our English ladies

* *Omnium prope quibus affligimur morborum origo et quasi semen*, says an intelligent medical writer of the last century.

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were absolutely infatuated about the military; and a man who had otherwise but little chance, had only to appear in regimentals, to turn the scale in his favour. One would have thought the race of soldiery was about to become suddenly extinct; for in almost every third marriage that took place within two years of the magnificent event at Waterloo—whether rich or poor, high or low—a *red-coat* was sure to be the "principal performer." Let the reader then, being apprised of this influenza—for what else was it?—set before his imagination the tall, commanding figure of Captain C——, his frank and noble bearing—his excellent family—his fortune, upwards of four thousand a-year—and calculate the chances in his favour!

I met him several times in private society, during his stay in town, and have his image vividly in my eye, as he appeared on the last evening we met. He wore a blue coat, white waistcoat, and an ample black neckerchief. His hair was very light, and disposed with natural grace over a remarkably fine forehead, the left corner of which bore the mark of a slight sabre-cut. His eye, bright hazel—clear and full—which you would, in your own mind, instantly compare to that of

Mars—to threaten and command,

was capable of an expression of the most winning and soul-subduing tenderness. Much more might I say in his praise, and truly—but that I have a melancholy end in view. Suffice it to add, that, wherever he moved, he seemed the sun of the social circle, gazed on by many a soft starlike eye, with trembling rapture—the envied object of

Nods, becks, and wreathed smiles,

from all that was fair and beautiful.

He could not remain long disengaged. Intelligence soon found its way to town, of his having formed an attachment to Miss Ellen ——, a wealthy and beautiful northern heiress, whose heart soon surrendered to its skilful assailant. Everybody was pleased with the match, and pronounced it suitable in all respects. I had an opportunity of seeing Captain C—— and Miss —— together at an evening party in London; for the young lady's family spent the season in town, and were, of course, attended by the Captain, who took up his quarters in —— Street. A handsome couple they looked.

This was nearly twelve months after their engagement; and most of the preliminaries had been settled on both sides, and the event was fixed to take place within a fortnight of Miss —— and family's return to ——shire. The last day of their stay in town, they formed a large and gay water party, and proceeded up the river a little beyond Richmond, in a beautiful open boat, belonging to Lord ——, a cousin of the Captain's. It was rather late before their return; and, long ere their arrival at Westminster Stairs, the wind and rain combined against the party, and assailed them with a fury, against which their awning formed but an insufficient protection. Captain C—— had taken an oar for the last few miles; and, as they had to pull against a strong tide, his task was not a trifling one. When he resigned his oar, he was in a perfect bath of perspiration; but he drew on his coat, and resumed the seat he had formerly occupied beside Miss ——, at the back of the boat. The awning unfortunately got rent immediately behind where they sat; and, what with the splashing of the water on his back, and the squally gusts of wind which incessantly burst upon them, Captain C—— got thoroughly wet and chilled. Miss —— grew uneasy about him; but he laughed off her apprehensions, assuring her that they were groundless, and that he was "too old a soldier" to suffer from such a trifling thing as a little "wind and wet." On leaving the boat, he insisted on accompanying them home to —— Square, and stayed there upwards of an hour, busily conversing with them about their departure on the morrow. While there, he took a glass or two of wine, but did not change his clothes. On

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returning to his lodgings, he was too busily and pleasantly occupied with thoughts about his approaching nuptials, to advert to the necessity of using more precautions against cold, before retiring to bed. He sat down in his dressing-room, without ordering a fire to be lit, and wrote two or three letters; after which he got into bed. Now, how easy it would have been for Captain C—— to obviate any possible ill consequences, by simply ringing for warm water to put his feet in, and a basin of gruel, or posset? He did not do either of these, however, thinking it would be time enough to "cry out when he was hurt." In the morning he rose, and, though a little indisposed, immediately after breakfast drove to ——— Square, to see off Miss —— and the family; for it had been arranged that he should remain behind a day or two, in order to complete a few purchases of jewellery, &c., and then follow the party to ——shire. He rode on horseback beside their travelling carriage a few miles out of town; and then took his leave and returned. On his way home he called at my house; but, finding me out, left his card, with a request that I would come and see him in the evening. About seven o'clock I was with him. I found him in his dressing-gown, in any easy-chair, drinking coffee. He looked rather dejected, and spoke in a desponding tone. He complained of the common symptoms of catarrh; and detailed to me the account which I have just laid before the reader. I remonstrated with him on his last night's imprudence.

"Ah, Doctor ——, I wish to Heaven I had rowed on to Westminster, tired as I was!" said he. "Good God, what if I have caught my death of cold? You cannot conceive how singular my sensations are."

"That's generally the way with patients after the mischief's done," I replied, with a smile. "But come! come! only take care of yourself, and matters are not at all desperate!"

"Heigh ho!"

"Sighing like a furnace," I continued gaily, on hearing him utter several sighs in succession—"You sons of Mars make hot work of it, both in love and war!"—Again he sighed. "Why, what's the matter, captain?"

"Oh, nothing—nothing," he replied languidly; "I suppose a cold generally depresses one's spirits—is it so? Is it a sign of a *severe*"——

"It is a sign that a certain person"——

"Poh, doctor, poh!" said he, with an air of lassitude, don't think me so childish!—I'll tell you candidly what has contributed to depress my spirits. For this last week or so, I've had a strange sort of conviction that"——

"Nonsense—none of your nervous fancies"——

"Ah, but I *have* doctor," he continued, scarcely noticing the interruption; "I have felt a sort of presentiment—a foreboding that—that—*something* or other would occur to prevent my marriage!"

"Oh, tush, tush!—every one has those low nervous fancies that is not accustomed to sickness."

"Well—it *may* be so—I hope it may be nothing more; but I seem to hear a voice whispering—or, at least, to be under an influence to that effect, that the cup will be dashed brimful from my lips—a fearful slip! It seems as if my Ellen were too great a happiness for the Fates to allow me."

"Too great a fiddlestick, captain!—so your schoolboy has a fearful apprehension that he cannot outlive the day of his finally leaving school—too glorious and happy an era!"

"I know well what you allude to—but *mine* is a calm and rational apprehension"——

"Come, come, Captain C——, this is going too far. Raillery apart, however, I can fully enter into your feelings," I continued, perceiving his morbid excitement. "'Tis but human nature to feel trepidation and apprehension when approaching some great CRISIS of one's existence. One is apt to give unfavourable *possibilities* an undue preponderance over *probabilities;* and it is easily to be accounted for, on the known tendency we find within ourselves, on ordinary occa-

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sions, to shape events according to our *wishes*—and in our over-anxiety to guard against such"——

"Very metaphysical—very true, I dare say"——

"Well—to be matter-of-fact—*I* had all your feelings — perhaps greatly aggravated—at the time of my own marriage"——

"Eh?—indeed?—Had you really?" he inquired eagerly, laying his hand on mine—continuing, with an air of anxious curiosity—"Did you ever feel a sort of conviction that some mysterious agency was awaiting your approach towards the critical point, and, when just within reach of your object, would suddenly smite you down?"

"Ay, to be sure," said I, smiling; "a mere flutter of feeling—which you see others have besides yourself; but that *you*—trained to confront danger—change—casualties of all sorts—that *you*—you, with your frame of Herculean build"——

"Well—a truce to your banter!" he interrupted me, somewhat impatiently; "I shouldn't mind taking you ten to one that I don't live to be married after all!"

"Come, this amounts to a symptom of your indisposition. You have got more fever on you than I thought—and you grow light-headed!—you must really get to bed, and, in the morning, all these fantasies will be gone."

"Well—I hope in God they may! But they horridly oppress me! I own that, latterly, I've given in a little to *fatalism*."

This won't do at all, thought I, taking my pen in hand, and beginning to write a prescription.

"Are you thirsty at all? any *catching* in the side when you breathe? any cough?" &c. &c., said I, asking him the usual routine of questions. I feared, from the symptoms he described, that he had caught a very severe, and, possibly, obstinate cold—so I prescribed active medicines. Amongst others, I recollect ordering him one-fourth of a grain of *tartarised antimony* every four hours, for the purpose of encouraging the insensible perspiration, and thereby determining the fever outwards. I then left him, promising to call about noon the next day, expressing my expectations of finding him perfectly recovered from his indisposition. I found him the following morning in bed, thoroughly under the influence of the medicines I had prescribed, and, in fact, much better in every respect. The whole surface of his body was damp and clammy to the touch, and he had exactly the proper sensation of nausea—both occasioned by the antimony. I contented myself with prescribing a repetition of the medicines.

"Well, Captain, and what has become of your gloomy forebodings of last night?" I inquired with a smile.

"Why — hem! I'm certainly not quite so desponding as I was last night; but still, the goal—the goal's not reached yet! I'm not *well* yet—and, even if I were, there's a good fortnight's space for contingencies!"

* * I enjoined him to keep house for a day or two longer, and persevere with the medicines during that time, in order to his complete recovery, and he reluctantly acquiesced. He had written to inform Miss ——, that owing to "a slight cold," and his jeweller's disappointing him about the trinkets he had promised, his stay in town would be prolonged two or three days. This circumstance had fretted and worried him a good deal.

One of the few enjoyments which my professional engagements permitted me, was the opera, where I might, for a while, forget the plodding realities of life, and wander amid the magnificent regions of music and imagination. Few people, indeed, are so disposed to "make the most" of their time at the opera as medical men, to whom it is a sort of stolen pleasure; they sit on thorns, liable to be summoned out immediately—to exchange the bright scenes of fairyland for the dreary bedside of sickness and death. I may not, perhaps, speak the feelings of my more phlegmatic brethren; but the considerations above named always occasion me to sit listening to what is going on in a state of painful

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suspense and nervousness, which is aggravated by the slightest noise at the box-door—by the mere trying of the handle. On the evening of the day in question, a friend of my wife's had kindly allowed us the use of her box; and we were both sitting in our places at a musical banquet of unusual splendour; for it was Catalani's benefit. In looking round the house, during the interval between the opera and the ballet, I happened to cast my eye towards the opposite box, at the moment it was entered by two gentlemen of very fashionable appearance. Fancying that the person of one of them was familiar to me, I raised my glass, my sight being rather short. I almost let it fall out of my hand with astonishment—for one of the gentlemen was—Captain C——!—he whom I had that morning left in bed! Scarcely believing that I had seen aright, I redirected my glass to the same spot—but there was no mistaking the stately and handsome person of my patient. There he stood, with the gay, and even rather flustered air of one who has but recently adjourned thither from the wine-table! He seemed in very high spirits—his face flushed—chatting incessantly with his companion, and smiling and nodding frequently towards persons in various parts of the house. Concern and wonder at his rashness—his madness—in venturing out under such circumstances, kept me for some time breathless. Could I really be looking at my patient, Captain C——?—him whom I had left in bed, under the influence of strong sudorifics?—who had faithfully promised that he would keep within doors for two or three days longer? What had induced him to transgress the order of his medical attendant—thus to put matters in a fair train for verifying his own gloomy apprehensions expressed but the evening before? — Thoughts like these made me so uneasy, that, after failing to attract his eye, I resolved to go round to his box and remonstrate with him. After tapping at the door several times without being heard, on account of the loud tones in which they were laughing and talking, the door was opened.

"Good God! Doctor ——!" exclaimed Captain C—— in amazement, rising and giving me his hand. "Why, what on earth is the matter. What has brought you here? Is anything wrong? Heavens! have you heard anything about Miss ——?" he continued, all in a breath, turning pale.

"Not a breath—not a word—But what has brought you here, Captain? Are you stark staring mad?" I replied, as I continued grasping his hand, which was even then damp and clammy.

"Why—why—nothing particular," he stammered, startled by my agitated manner. "What is there so very wonderful in my coming to the opera? Have I done wrong, eh?" he inquired after a pause.

"You have acted like a *madman*, Captain C——, in venturing even out of your bedroom, while under influence of the medicines you were taking!"

"Oh, nonsense, my dear doctor, nonsense! What harm can there be? I felt infinitely better after you left me this morning;" and he proceeded to explain, that his companion, to whom he introduced me, was Lieutenant ——, the brother of his intended bride; that he had that morning arrived in town from Portsmouth, had called on the captain, and, after drinking a glass or two of champagne, and forcing the captain to join him, had prevailed on him to accompany him to dinner at his hotel. Lieutenant —— overcame all his scruples—laughed at the idea of his "slight cold," and said it would be "unkind to refuse the brother of Ellen!"—so, after dinner they both adjourned to the opera. I nodded towards the door, and we both left the box for a moment or two.

"Why, Doctor ——, you don't mean to say that I'm running any *real* risk?" he inquired, with some trepidation. "What *could* I do, you know, when the lieutenant there—only just returned from his cruise—Ellen's brother, you know"——

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"Excuse me, Captain ——. Did you take the medicines I ordered, regularly, up to the time of your going out?" I inquired anxiously.

"To be sure I did; punctual as clockwork; and, egad! now, I think of it," he added eagerly, "I took a *double* dose of the powders, just before leaving my room, by way of making 'assurance doubly sure,' you know—ha, ha! Right, eh!"

"Have you perspired during the day, as usual?"

"Oh, profusely—profusely! Egad, I must have sweated all the fever out long ago, I think! I hadn't been in the open air half an hour, when my skin was as dry as yours—as dry as ever it was in my life. Nay, in fact, I felt rather chilled than otherwise."

"Allow me, captain—did you drink much at dinner?"

"Why—I own—I think I'd my share; these tars, you know—such cursed soakers"——

"Let me feel your pulse," said I. It was full and thrilling, beating upwards of one hundred a minute. My looks, I suppose, alarmed him; for, while I was feeling his pulse, he grew very pale, and leaned against the box-door, saying, in a fainter tone than before, "I'm afraid I've done wrong in coming out. Your looks alarm me."

"You have certainly acted very—very imprudently; but I hope the mischief is not irremediable," said I, in as cheerful a tone as I could, for I saw that he was growing excessively agitated. "At all events, *if* you'll take my advice"——

"*If*—there's no need of taunting me"——

"Well, then, you'll return home instantly, and muffle yourself up in your cloak as closely as possible."

"I will! By the way, do you remember the bet I offered you?" said he, with a sickly smile, wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "I—I—fear you may take it, *and win!* Good God! what evil star is over me? Would to Heaven this Lieutenant —— had never crossed my path!—I'll return home this instant, and do all you recommend; and, for God's sake, call early in the morning, whether I send for you or not! By ——! your looks and manner have nearly given me the brain fever!" I took my leave, promising to be with him early; and advising him to take a warm bath the moment it could be procured—to persevere with the powders—and lie in bed till I called. But alas! alas! alas! the mischief had been DONE!

"Dear me, what a remarkably fine-looking man that Captain C—— is," said my wife, as soon as I had reseated myself beside her.

"He is a *dead* man, my love, if you like!" I replied, with a melancholy air. The little incident just recorded made me too sad to sit out the ballet, so we left very early, and I do not think we interchanged more than a word or two in going home; and those *were*, "Poor Miss ——?"—"Poor Captain C——!" I do not pretend to say that even the rash conduct of Captain C——, and its probable consequences, could, in every instance, warrant such gloomy fears; but in his case I felt, with himself, a sort of *superstitious* apprehension, I knew not why.

I found him, on calling in the morning, exhibiting the incipient symptoms of inflammation of the lungs. He complained of increasing difficulty of breathing—a sense of painful oppression and constriction all over his chest, and a hard harassing cough, attended with excruciating pain. His pulse quivered and thrilled under the finger, like a tense harpstring after it has been twanged; the whole surface of his body was dry and heated; his face was flushed, and full of anxiety. A man of his robust constitution and plethoric habit was one of the very worst subjects of inflammation! I took from the arm, myself, a very large quantity of blood, which presented the usual appearance in such cases, and prescribed active lowering remedies. But neither these measures, nor the application of a large blister in the evening, when I again saw him, seemed to make any impression on the complaint, so I ordered him to be bled again. Poor Captain C——! From that morning he prepared himself for a fatal termination

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of his illness, and lamented, in the most passionate terms, that he had not acted up to my advice in time!

On returning home from my evening visit, I found an express, requiring my instant attendance on a lady of distinction in the country, an old patient of mine; and was obliged to hurry off, without having time to do more than commit the care of Captain C——, and another case equally urgent, to Dr D——, a friend of mine close by, imploring him to keep up the most active treatment with the captain, and promising him that I should return during the next day. I was detained in the country for two days, during which I scarcely left Lady ——'s bedroom an instant; and before I left for town, she expired under heart-rending circumstances. On returning to town, I found several urgent cases requiring my instant attention; and, first and foremost, that of poor Captain C——. Dr D—— was out, so I hurried to my patient's bedside at once. It cannot injure any one, at this distance of time, to state plainly that the poor captain's case had been most deplorably mismanaged during my absence. It was owing to no fault of my friend Dr D——, who had done his utmost, and had his own large practice to attend to. He was therefore under the necessity of committing the case to the more immediate superintendence of a young and inexperienced member of the profession, who, in his ignorance and timidity, threw aside the only chances for Captain C——'s life—repeated blood-letting. Only *once* did Mr —— bleed him, and then took away about four ounces! Under the judicious management of Dr D——, the inroads of the inflammation had been sensibly checked; but it rallied again, and made head against the languid resistance continued by the young apothecary; so that I arrived but in time to witness the closing scene.

He was absolutely withering under the fever: the difficulty with which he drew his breath amounted almost to suffocation. He had a dry, hacking cough—the oppression of his chest was greater than ever; and what he expectorated was of a *black* colour! He was delirious, and did not know me. He fancied himself on the river rowing—then endeavouring to protect Miss —— from the inclemency of the weather; and the expressions of moving tenderness which he coupled with her name were heart-breaking. Then, again, he thought himself in ——shire, superintending the alterations of his house, which was getting ready for their reception on their marriage. He mentioned *my* name, and said, "What a gloomy man that Dr —— is, Ellen! —he keeps one stewing in bed for a week, if one has but a common cold!"

Letters were despatched into ——shire to acquaint his family, and that of Miss ——, with the melancholy tidings of his dangerous illness. Several of his relations soon made their appearance; but as Miss ——'s party did not go direct home, but stayed a day or two on the way, I presume the letters reached —— House long before their arrival, and were not seen by the family before poor Captain C—— had expired.

I called again on him in the evening. The first glance at his countenance sufficed to show me that he could not survive the night. I found that the cough and spitting had ceased suddenly; he felt no pain: his feeble, varying pulse indicated that the powers of nature were rapidly sinking. His lips had assumed a fearfully livid hue, and were occasionally retracted so as to show all his teeth: and his whole countenance was fallen. He was quite sensible, and aware that he was *dying*. He bore the intelligence with noble fortitude, saying it was but the fruit of his own imprudence and folly. He several times ejaculated, "Oh Ellen—Ellen—Ellen!" and shook his head feebly, with a woeful despairing look upwards, but without shedding a tear. He was past all display of active emotion!

"Shouldn't you call me a *suicide*, Dr ——?" said he mournfully, on seeing me sitting beside him.

"Oh, assuredly not! Dismiss such thoughts, dear captain, I beg! We are *all* in the hands of the Almighty, captain. It is He who orders our ends,"

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said I, gently grasping his hand, which lay passive on the counterpane. "Well, I suppose it is so. His will be done!" he exclaimed, looking reverently upwards, and closing his eyes. I rose, and walked to the table, on which stood his medicine, to see how much of it he had taken. *There* lay an unopened letter from Miss ——! It had arrived by that morning's post, and bore the post-mark of the town at which they were making their halt by the way. Captain ——'s friends considered it better not to agitate him, by informing him of its arrival; for as Miss —— could not be apprised of his illness, it might be of a tenor to agitate and tantalise him. My heart ached to see it. I returned presently to my seat beside him.

"Doctor," he whispered, "will you be good enough to look for my white waistcoat—it is hanging in the dressing-room, and feel in the pocket for a little paper-parcel?" I rose, did as he directed, and brought him what he asked for.

"Open it, and you'll see poor Ellen's wedding-ring and guard, which I purchased only a day or two ago. I wish to see them," said he, in a low but firm tone of voice. I removed the wool, and gazed at the glistening trinkets in silence, as did Captain C——.

"They will do to wed me to the *worm!*" said he, extending towards me the little finger of his left hand. The tears nearly blinding me, I did as he wished, but could not get them past the first joint.

"Ah, Ellen has a small finger!" said he. A tear fell from my eye upon his hand. He looked at me for an instant with apparent surprise. "Never mind, doctor—that will do—I see they won't go further. Now, let me die with them on; and, when I am no more, let them be given to Ellen. I have wedded her in my heart—she is my wife!" He continued gazing fixedly at the finger on which the rings were.

"Of course, she cannot know of my illness?" he inquired faintly, looking at me. I shook my head.

"Good. 'Twill break her little heart, I'm afraid!" Those were the last words I ever heard him utter; for, finding that my feelings were growing too excited, and that the captain seemed disposed to sleep, I rose and left the room, followed by Lieutenant ——, who had been sitting at his friend's bedside all day long, and looked dreadfully pale and exhausted. "Doctor," said he, in a broken voice, as we stood together in the hall, "I have *murdered* my friend, and he thinks I have. He won't speak to me, nor look at me! He hasn't opened his lips to me once, though I've been at his bedside night and day. Yes," he continued, almost choking, "I've murdered him; and what is to become of my *sister?*" I made him no reply, for my heart was full.

In the morning I found Captain C—— *laid out;* for he had died about midnight.

Few scenes are fraught with more solemnity and awe, none more chilling to the heart, than the chamber of the recent dead. It is like the cold porch of eternity! The sepulchral silence, the dim light, the fearful order and repose of all around—a sick-room, as it were, suddenly changed into a charnel-house—the central object in the gloomy picture, the bed—the yellow effigy of him *that was*, looking coldly out from the white unruffled sheets—the lips that must speak no more—the eyes that are shut for ever!

The features of Captain C—— were calm and composed; but was it not woeful to see that fine countenance surrounded with the close crimped cap, injuring its outline and proportions!—Here, reader, lay the victim of A SLIGHT COLD.

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# CHAPTER XXI.

## RICH AND POOR.

A REMARKABLE and affecting juxtaposition of the two poles, so to speak, of human condition—affluence and poverty—rank and degradation—came under my notice during the early part of the year 181–. The dispensations of Providence are fearful levellers of the factitious distinctions among men! Little boots it to our common foe, whether he pluck his prey from the downy satin-curtained couch, or the wretched pallet of a prison or a workhouse! The oppressive splendour of rank and riches, indeed!—what has it of solace or mitigation to him bidden "to turn his pale face to the wall"—to look his last on life, its toys and tinselries?

The Earl of ——'s* old tormentor, the gout, had laid close siege to him during the early part of the winter of 181–, and inflicted on him agonies of unusual intensity and duration. It left him in a very low and poor state of health—his spirits utterly broken—and his temper soured and irritable, to an extent that was intolerable to those around him. The discussion of a political question, in the issue of which his interests were deeply involved, seduced him into an attendance at the House of Lords, long before he was in a fit state for removal, even from his bedchamber; and the consequences of such a shattered invalid's premature exposure to a bleak winter's wind may be easily anticipated. He was laid again on a bed of suffering; and having, through some sudden pique, dismissed his old family physician, his lordship was pleased to summon me to supply his place.

* Le *Duc* de ——!—*French Translator.*

The Earl of —— was celebrated for his enormous riches, and the more than Oriental scale of luxury and magnificence on which his establishment was conducted. The slanderous world farther gave him credit for a disposition of the most exquisite selfishness, which, added to his capricious and choleric humour, made him a very unenviable companion, even in health. What, then, must such a man be in sickness? I trembled at the task that was before me! It was a bitter December evening on which I paid him my first visit. Nearly the whole of the gloomy, secluded street in which his mansion was situated, was covered with straw; and men were stationed about it to prevent noise in any shape. The ample knocker was muffled and the bell unhung, lest the noise of either should startle the aristocratical invalid. The instant my carriage, with its muffled roll, drew up, the hall-door sprang open, as if by magic; for the watchful porter had orders to anticipate all comers, on pain of instant dismissal. Thick matting was laid over the hall floor—double carpeting covered the staircases and landings, from the top to the bottom of the house—and all the door edges were lined with list. How could sickness or death presume to enter, in spite of such precautions!

A servant, in large list-slippers, asked me, in a whisper, my name; and, on learning it, said the countess wished to have a few moments' interview with me, before I was shown up to his lordship. I was, therefore, led into a magnificent apartment, where her ladyship, with two grown-up daughters, and a young man in the Guards' uniform, sat sipping coffee

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—for they had but just left the dining-room. The countess looked pale and dispirited. "Doctor ——," said she, after a few words of course had been interchanged, "I'm afraid you'll have a trying task to manage his lordship. We are all worn out with attending on him, and yet he says we neglect him! Nothing can please or satisfy him!—What do you imagine was the reason of his dismissing Dr ——? Because he persisted in attributing the present seizure to his lordship's imprudent visit to the House!"

"Well, your ladyship knows I can but attempt to do my duty," I was answering, when, at that instant, the door was opened, and a sleek servant, all pampered and powdered, in a *sotto voce* tone informed the countess that his lordship had been inquiring for me. "Oh, for God's sake, go—go immediately," said her ladyship eagerly, "or we shall have no peace for a week to come!—I shall, perhaps, follow you in a few minutes! But mind, please, not a breath about Dr ——'s leaving!" I bowed, and left the room. I followed the servant up the noble staircase—vases and statues, with graceful lamps, at every landing—and was presently ushered into the "Bluebeard" chamber. Oh, the sumptuous—the splendid air of everything within it! Flowered, festooned satin window-draperies—flowered satin bed-curtains, gathered together at the top by a golden eagle—flowered satin counterpane! Beautiful Brussels muffled the tread of your feet, and delicately-carved chairs and couches solicited to repose! The very chamber-lamps, glistening in soft radiance from snowy marble stands in the further corners of the room, were tasteful and elegant in the extreme. In short, grandeur and elegance seemed to outvie one another, both in the materials and disposition of everything around me. I never saw anything like it before, nor have I since. I never in my life sat in such a yielding luxurious chair as the one I was beckoned to, beside the Earl. There was, in a word, everything calculated to cheat a man into a belief, that he belonged to a "higher order" than that of "poor humanity."

But for the lord—the owner of all this—my patient. Ay, there he lay, imbedded in down, amid snowy linen and figured satin—all that was visible of him being his little, sallow, wrinkled visage, worn with illness, age, and fretfulness, peering curiously at me from the depths of his pillow—and his left hand, lying outside the bed-clothes, holding a white embroidered handkerchief, with which he occasionally wiped his clammy features.

"U—u—gh! U—u—gh!" he groaned, or rather gasped, as a sudden twinge of pain twisted and corrugated his features almost out of all resemblance to humanity—till they looked more like those of a strangled ape than the Right Honourable the Earl of ——. The paroxysm presently abated. "You've been—down stairs—more than—five minutes—I believe—Dr ——?" he commenced, in a petulant tone, pausing for breath between every two words—his features not yet recovered from their contortions. I bowed.

"I flatter myself—it was *I*—who sent—for you—Dr ——, and—not her ladyship," he continued. I bowed again, and was going to explain, when he resumed.

"Ah! I see! Heard—the whole story of Dr ——'s dismissal—ugh—ugh—eh!—May I—beg the favour—of hearing her *ladyship's* version—of the affair?"

"My lord, I heard nothing but the simple fact of Dr ——'s having ceased to attend your lordship"——

"Ah!—*ceased to attend!* Good!" he repeated with a sneer.

"Will your lordship permit me to ask if you have much pain just now?" I inquired, anxious to terminate his splenetic display. I soon discovered that he was in the utmost peril; for there was every symptom of the gout's having been driven from its old quarter—the extremities—to the vital organs, the stomach and bowels. One of the most startling symptoms was the sensation he described as resembling that of a platter of *ice* laid upon the pit of his stomach; and he complained also of increasing nausea. Though not choosing to apprize him of the exact

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extent of his danger, I strove so to shape my questions and comments that he might infer his being in dangerous circumstances. He either did not, however, or would not comprehend me. I told him that the remedies I should recommend——

"Ah, by the way," said he, turning abruptly towards me, "it mustn't be the execrable stuff that Dr —— half poisoned me with! 'Gad, sir, it had a most diabolical stench—garlic was a pine-apple to it; and here was I obliged to lie soaked in eau de Cologne, and half-stifled with musk. He did it on purpose — he had a spite against me." I begged to be shown the medicines he complained of, and his valet brought me the half-emptied vial. I found my predecessor had been exhibiting *assafœtida* and musk; and could no longer doubt the coincidence of his view of the case and mine.

"I'm afraid, my lord," said I, hesitatingly, "that I shall find myself compelled to continue the use of the medicines which Dr —— prescribed."

"I'll be —— if you *do*, though, that's all," replied the Earl, continuing to mutter indistinctly some insulting words about my "small acquaintance with the *pharmacopœia*." I took no notice of it.

"Would your lordship," said I, after a pause, "object to the use of camphor or ammonia?" *

"I object to the use of every medicine but one, and that is a taste of some potted boar's flesh, which my nephew, I understand, has this morning sent from abroad."

"My lord, it is utterly out of the question. Your lordship, it is my duty to inform you, is in extremely dangerous circumstances"——

"The devil I am!" he exclaimed, with an incredulous smile. "Poh, poh! So Dr —— said. According to him, I ought to have *resigned* about a week ago! Egad—but—but—what symptom of danger is there now?" he inquired abruptly.

"Why, *one*—in fact, my lord, the *worst* is—the sensation of numbness at the pit of the stomach, which your lordship mentioned just now."

"Poh! — gone — gone — gone! A mere nervous sensation, I apprehend. I am freer from pain just now than I have been all along." His face changed a little. "Doctor — rather faint with talking—can I have a cordial? Pierre, get me some brandy!" he added, in a feeble voice. The valet looked at me—I nodded acquiescence, and he instantly brought the Earl a wine-glassful.

"Another — another — another," gasped the Earl, his face suddenly bedewed with a cold perspiration. A strange expression flitted for an instant over the features; his eyelids drooped; there was a little twitching about the mouth——

"Pierre! Pierre! Pierre! call the countess!" said I hurriedly, loosening the earl's shirt-neck, for I saw he was *dying*. Before the valet returned, however, while the muffled tramp of footsteps was heard on the stairs, approaching nearer—nearer—nearer—it was all over! The haughty Earl of ——had gone where rank and riches availed him nothing—to be *alone with God!*

* * * *

On arriving home that evening, my mind saddened with the scene I had left, I found my wife, Emily, sitting by the drawing-room fire, alone, and in tears. On inquiring the reason of it, she told me that a charwoman, who had been that day engaged at our house, had been telling Jane, my wife's maid, who, of course, communicated it to her mistress, one of the most heart-rending tales of distress that she had ever listened to—that poverty and disease united could inflict on humanity. My sweet wife's voice, ever eloquent in the cause of benevolence, did not require much exertion to persuade me to resume my walking trim, and go that very evening to the scene of wretchedness she

* His lordship, with whom—as possibly I should have earlier informed the reader—I had some little personal acquaintance before being called in professionally, had a tolerable knowledge of medicine; which will account for my mentioning what remedies I intended to exhibit. In fact, he *insisted* on knowing.

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described. The charwoman had gone half an hour ago, but left the name and address of the family she spoke of, and, after learning them, I set off. The cold was so fearfully intense, that I was obliged to return and get a "comfortable"* for my neck; and Emily took the opportunity to empty all the loose silver in her purse into my hand, saying, "You know what to do with it, love!" Blessing her benevolent heart, I once more set out on my errand of mercy. With some difficulty, I found out the neighbourhood, threading my doubtful way through a labyrinth of obscure back-streets, lanes, and alleys, till I came to "Peter's Place," where the objects of my visit resided. I began to be apprehensive for the safety of my person and property, when I discovered the sort of neighbourhood I had got into.

"Do you know where some people of the name of O'Hurdle live?" I inquired of the watchman, who was passing bawling the hour.†

"Yis, I knows *two* of that 'ere name hereabouts—which Hurdle is it, sir?" inquired the gruff guardian of the night.

"I really don't exactly know—the people I want are very, *very* poor."

"Oh! oh! oh! I'm thinking they're all much of a muchness for the matter of that, about here," he replied, setting down his lantern, and slapping his hands against his sides to keep himself warm.

"But the people I want are very *ill*—I'm a doctor."

"Oh, oh! you must be meaning 'em 'oose son was transported yesterday! His name was Tim O'Hurdle, sir—though some called him Jimmy—and I was the man that catch'd him, sir—I did! It was for a robbery in this here"——

"Ay, ay—I dare say they are the people I want. Where is their house?" I inquired hastily, somewhat disturbed at the latter portion of his intelligence—a new and forbidding feature of the case.

"I'll show'ee the way, sir," said the watchman, walking before me, and holding his lantern close to the ground to light my path. He led me to the last house of the place, and through a miserable dilapidated doorway; then up two pair of narrow, dirty, broken stairs, till we found ourselves at the top of the house. He knocked at the door with the end of his stick, and called out, "Holloa, missus! Hey! Within there! You're wanted here!" adding suddenly, in a lower tone, touching his hat, "It's a bitter night, sir—a trifle, sir, to keep one's self warm—drink your health, sir." I gave him a trifle, motioned him away, and took his place at the door.

"Thank your honour!—mind your watch and pockets, sir, that's all," he muttered, and left me. I felt very nervous as the sound of his retreating footsteps died away down stairs. I had half a mind to follow him.

"Who's there?" inquired a female voice through the door, opened only an inch or two.

"It's I—a doctor. Is your name O'Hurdle? Is any one ill here? I'm come to see you. Betsy Jones, a charwoman, told me of you."

"You're right, sir," replied the same voice, sorrowfully. Walk in, sir;" and the door was opened enough for me to enter.

Now, reader, who, while glancing over these sketches, are perhaps reposing in the lap of luxury, believe me when I tell you, that the scene which I shall attempt to set before you, as I encountered it, I feel to beggar all my powers of description; and that what you may conceive to be exaggerations, are infinitely short of the frightful realities of that evening. Had I not seen and known for myself, I should scarcely have believed that such misery existed.

"Wait a moment, sir, an' I'll fetch you a light," said the woman, in a strong Irish accent; and I stood still outside the door till she returned with a rushlight, stuck in a blue bottle. I had time for no more than one glimpse

* "Cette seconde cravate d'hiver se nomme, en Angleterre, *un comfortable.*"—*French translator.*

† "Criant, ou plutôt hurlant: *Minuit et demi—il fait froid—nuit obscure,*" &c.—*Ibid.*

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at the haggard features and filthy ragged appearance of the bearer, with an infant at the breast, before a gust of wind, blowing through an unstopped broken pane in the window, suddenly extinguished the candle, and we were left in a sort of darkness visible, the only object I could see being the faint glow of expiring embers on the hearth. "Would your honour be after standing still a while, or you'll be thredding on the chilther?" said the woman; and, bending down, she endeavoured to relight the candle by the embers. The poor creature tried in vain, however; for it seemed there was but an inch or two of candle left, and the heat of the embers melted it away, and the wick fell out.

"Oh, murther—there! What *will* we do?" exclaimed the woman; "that's the last bit of candle we've in the house, an' it's not a farthing I have to buy another!"

"Come—send and buy another," said I, giving her a shilling, though I was obliged to *feel* for her hand.

"Oh, thank your honour!" said she, "an' we'll soon be seeing one another. Here, Sal! Sal! Sally — Here, ye cratur!"

"Well, and what d'ye want with *me?*" asked a sullen voice from another part of the room, while there was a rustling of straw.

"Fait, an' ye must get up wid ye, and go to buy a candle. Here's a shilling"——

"Heigh—and isn't it a loaf o' bread ye should rather be after buying, mother?" growled the same voice.

"Perhaps the doctor won't mind," stammered the mother; "he won't mind our getting a loaf too."

"Oh, no, no! For God's sake go directly, and get what you like!" said I, touched by the woman's tone and manner.

"Ho, Sal! Get up—ye may buy some bread too"——

"Bread! bread! bread!—Where's the shilling?" said the same voice, in quick and eager tones; and the ember-light enabled me barely to distinguish the dim outline of a figure rising from the straw on which it had been stretched, and which nearly overturned me by stumbling against me, on its way towards where the mother stood. It was a grown-up girl, who, after receiving the shilling, promised to bring the candle lighted, lest her own fire should not be sufficient, and withdrew, slamming the door violently after her, and rattling down stairs with a rapidity which showed the interest she felt in her errand.

"I'm sorry it's not a seat we have that's fit for you, sir," said the woman, approaching towards where I was standing; "but if I may make so bold as to take your honour's hand, I'll guide you to the only one we have—barring the floor—a box by the fire, and there ye'll sit perhaps till she comes with the light."

"Anywhere—anywhere, my good woman," said I; "but I hope your daughter will return soon, for I have not long to be here;" and, giving her my gloved hand, she led me to a deal box, on which I sat down, and she on the floor beside me. I was beginning to ask her some questions, when the moaning of a little child interrupted me.

"Hush! hush! ye little divel—hush! —ye'll be waking your poor daddy!—hush!—go to sleep wid ye!" said the woman, in an earnest under tone.

"Och—och—mammy!—mammy! an' isn't it so *cowld?*—I *can't* sleep, mammy," replied the tremulous voice of a very young child; and, directing my eyes to the quarter from which the sound came, I fancied I saw a poor shivering half-naked creature, cowering under the window.

"Hish—lie still wid ye, ye unfortunat' little divel—an' ye'll presently get something to eat. We ha'n't none of us tasted a morsel sin' the morning, doctor!" The child she spoke to ceased its moanings instantly; but I heard the sound of its little teeth chattering, and of its hands rubbing and striking together. Well it might, poor wretch—for I protest the room was nearly as cold as the open air—for, besides the want of fire, the bleak wind



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blew, in chilling gusts, through the broken panes of the window.

"Why, how many of you are there in this place, my good woman?" said I.

"Och, murther! murther! murther! and isn't there—barring Sal, that's gone for the candle, and Bobby, that's out begging, and Tim, that the ould divels at Newgate have sent away to *Bottomless* * yesterday," she continued, bursting into tears;—"Och, an' won't that same be the death o' me, and the poor father o' the boy—an' it wasn't sich a sentence he deserved—but, hush! hush!" she continued, lowering her tones, "an' it's waking the father o' him, I'll be, that doesn't"——

"I understand your husband is ill," said I.

"Fait, sir, as ill as the smatticks † (asthmatics) can make him—the Lord pity him! But he's had a blessed hour's sleep, the poor fellow; though the little brat he has in his arms has been making a noise, a little divel that it is—it's the youngest barring this one I'm suckling—an' it's not a fortnight it is sin' it first looked on its mother!" she continued, sobbing, and kissing her baby's hand. "Och, och! that the little cratur had never been born!"

I heard footsteps slowly approaching the room, and presently a few rays of light flickered through the chinks and fissures of the door, which was in a moment or two pushed open, and Sal made her appearance, shading the lighted candle in her hand, and holding a quartern loaf under her arm. She had brought but a wretched rush-light, which she hastily stuck into the neck of the bottle, and placed it on a shelf over the fireplace; and then—what a scene was visible!

The room was a garret, and the sloping ceiling—if such it might be called—made it next to impossible to move anywhere in an upright position. The mockery of a window had not one entire pane of glass in it; but some of the holes were stopped with straw, rags, and brown paper, while one or two were not stopped at all! There was not an article of furniture in the place—no, not a bed, chair, or table of any kind; the last remains of it had been seized for arrears of rent—eighteenpence a-week—by the horrid harpy, their landlady, who lived on the ground-floor! The floor was littered with dirty straw, such as swine might scorn—but which formed the only couch of this devoted family! The rushlight eclipsed the dying glow of the few embers, so that there was not even the *appearance* of a fire! And *this* in a garret facing the north, on one of the bitterest and bleakest nights I ever knew! My heart sank within me at witnessing such frightful misery and destitution, and contrasting it, for an instant, with the aristocratical splendour, the exquisite luxuries, of my last patient!—*Lazarus and Dives!*

The woman, with whom I had been conversing, was a mere bundle of filthy rags—a squalid, shivering, starved creature, holding to her breast a half-naked infant—her matted hair hanging long and loosely down her back, and over her shoulders; her daughter Sal was in like plight—a sullen, ill-favoured slut, of about eighteen, who seemed ashamed of being seen, and hung her head like a guilty one. She had resumed her former station on some straw—her bed!—in the extreme corner of the room, where she was squatting, with a little creature cowering close beside her, both munching ravenously the bread which had been purchased. The miserable father of the family was seated on the floor, with his back propped against the opposite side of the fireplace to that which I occupied, and held a child clasped loosely in his arms, though he had plainly fallen asleep. Oh, what a wretched object!—a foul, shapeless, brown-paper cap on his head, and a ragged fustian jacket on his back, which a beggar might have spurned with loathing!

The sum of what the woman communicated to me was, that her husband, a bricklayer by trade, had been long unable to work on account of his asthma; and that their only means of subsistence were a paltry pittance from the parish, her own scanty earn-

* Botany Bay. † *Asmésique. Fr. Tr.*

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ings as a washerwoman, which had been interrupted by her recent confinement, and charities collected by Sal and Bobby, who was then out begging. Their oldest son, Tim, a lad of sixteen, had been transported for seven years, the day before, for a robbery, of which his mother vehemently declared him innocent; and this last circumstance had, more than all the rest, completely broken the hearts of both his father and mother, who had absolutely starved themselves and their children, in order to hoard up enough to fee an Old Bailey counsel to plead for their son! The husband had been for some time, I found, an out-patient of one of the infirmaries: "and this poor little *darlint*," said she, sobbing bitterly, and hugging her infant closer to her, "has got the measles, I'm fearin'; and little Bobby, too, is catching them. Och, murther, murther! Oh, Christ, pity us, poor sinners that we are! Oh! what will we do?—what will we do?" —and she almost choked herself with stifling her sobs, for fear of waking her husband.

"And what is the matter with the child that your husband is holding in his arms?" I inquired, pointing to it, as it sat in its father's arms, munching a little crust of bread, and ever and anon patting its father's face, exclaiming, "Da-a-a!—Ab-bab-ba!—Ab-bab-ba!"

"Och! what ails the cratur? Nothing, but that it's half-starved and naked—an' isn't that enough?—an isn't it *kilt* I wish we all were—every mother's son of us!" groaned the miserable woman, sobbing as if her heart would break. At that moment a lamentable noise was heard on the stairs, as of a lad crying, accompanied by the pattering of naked feet. "Och! murther!" exclaimed the woman, with an agitated air—"What's ailing with Bobby? Is it crying he is?" and, starting to the door, she threw it open time enough to admit a ragged shivering urchin, about ten years old, without shoes or stockings, and having no cap, and rags pinned about him, which he was obliged to hold up with his right hand, while the other covered his left cheek. The little wretch, after a moment's pause, occasioned by seeing a strange gentleman in the room, proceeded to put three or four coppers into his mother's lap, telling her with painful gestures, that a gentleman, whom he had followed a few steps in the street, importuning for charity, had turned round unexpectedly, and struck him a severe blow with a cane, over his face and shoulders.

"Let me look at your face, my poor little fellow," said I, drawing him to me; and, on removing his hand, I saw a long weal all down the left cheek. I wish I could forget the look of tearless agony with which his mother put her arms round his neck, and, drawing him to her breast, exclaimed faintly—"Bobby!—my Bobby!" After a few moments, she released the boy, pointing to the spot where his sisters sat, still munching their bread.

The instant he saw what they were doing, he sprang towards them, and plucked a large fragment from the loaf, fastening on it like a young wolf!

"Why, they'll finish the loaf before you've tasted it, my good woman," said I.

"Och, the poor things!—Let them—let them!" she replied, wiping away a tear. "I can do without it longer than they—the craturs!"

"Well, my poor woman," said I, "I have not much time to spare, as it is growing late. I came here to see what I could do for you as a doctor. How many of you are ill?"

"Fait, an' isn't it ailing we all of us are! Ah, your honour!—A 'firmary, without physic or victuals!"

"Well, we must see what can be done for you. What is the matter with your husband there?" said I, turning towards him. He was still asleep, in spite of the tickling and stroking of his child's hands, who, at the moment I looked, was trying to push the corner of its crust into its father's mouth, chuckling and crowing the while, as is the wont of children who find a passive subject for their drolleries.

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"Och! och! the little villain!—the thing!" said she impatiently, seeing the child's employment; "isn't it waking him it'll be?—st—st!"

"Let me see him nearer," said I: "I *must* wake him, and ask him a few questions."

I moved from my seat towards him. His head hung down drowsily. His wife took down the candle from the shelf, and held it a little above her husband's head, while I came in front of him, and stooped on one knee to interrogate him.

"Phelim!—love!—honey!—darlint!—Wake wid ye! And isn't it the doctor that comes to see ye!" said she, nudging him with her knee. He did not stir, however. The child, regardless of us, was still playing with his passive features. A glimpse of the awful truth flashed across my mind.

"Let me have the candle a moment, my good woman," said I, rather seriously.

The man was dead!

He must have expired nearly an hour before, for his face and hands were quite cold; but the position in which he sat, together with the scantiness of the light, concealed the event. It was fearful to see the ghastly pallor of the features, the fixed pupils, the glassy glare downwards, the fallen jaw!—Was it not a subject for a painter?—the living child in the arms of its dead father, unconsciously sporting with a corpse!

* * * *

To attempt a *description* of what ensued, would be idle, and even ridiculous. It is hardly possible even to imagine it! In one word, the neighbours who lived on the floor beneath were called in, and did their utmost to console the wretched widow and quiet the children. They laid out the corpse decently; and I left them all the silver I had about me, to enable them to purchase a few of the more pressing necessaries. I succeeded afterwards in gaining two of the children admittance into a charity school; and through my wife's interference, the poor widow received the efficient assistance of an unobtrusive, but most incomparable institution, "*The Strangers' Friend Society*." I was more than once present when those angels of mercy—those "true Samaritans"—the "Visiters" of the Society, as they are called—were engaged on their noble errand, and wished that their numbers were countless, and their means inexhaustible!

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# CHAPTER XXII.

## THE RUINED MERCHANT.

It is a common saying, that sorrows never come alone—that "it never rains, but it pours;"* and it has been verified by experience, even from the days of that prince of the wretched—the man "whose name was Job." Nowadays, directly a sudden accumulation of ills befalls a man, he utters some rash exclamation, like the one in question, and too often submits to the inflictions of Providence with sullen indifference—like a brute to a blow—or resorts, possibly, to suicide. Your poor, stupid, unobserving man, in such a case, cannot conceive how it comes to pass that all the evils under the sun are showered down upon *his* head—at once! There is no attempt to account for it on reasonable grounds—no reference to probable, nay, obvious causes—his own misconduct, possibly, or imprudence. In a word, he fancies that the only thing they resemble is Epicurus' fortuitous concourse of atoms. It is undoubtedly true that people are occasionally assailed by misfortunes so numerous, sudden, and simultaneous, as is really unaccountable. In the majority, however, of what are reputed such cases, a ready solution may be found, by any one of observation. Take a simple illustration:—A passenger suddenly falls down in a crowded thoroughfare; and when down, and unable to rise, the one following stumbles over him—the next over him—and so on—all unable to resist the on-pressing crowd behind; and so the first fallen lies nearly crushed and smothered. Now, is not this frequently the case with a man amid the cares and troubles of life? One solitary disaster—one unexpected calamity—befalls him; the sudden shock stuns him out of his self-possession; he is dispirited, confounded, paralysed—and down he falls, in the very throng of all the pressing cares and troubles of life, one implicating and dragging after it another—till all is uproar and consternation. Then it is that we hear passionate lamentations and cries of sorrows "never coming alone"—of all this "being against him;" and he either stupidly lies still, till he is crushed and trampled on, or, it may be, succeeds in scrambling to the first temporary resting-place he can espy, where he resigns himself to stupefied inaction, staring vacantly at the throng of mishaps following in the wake of that one which bore him down. Whereas, the first thought of one in such a situation should surely be, "Let me be 'up and doing,' and I may yet recover myself." "Directly a man determines to *think*," says an eminent writer, "he is well-nigh sure of bettering his condition."

It is to the operation of such causes as these that is to be traced, in a great majority of cases, the necessity for medical interference. Within the sphere of my own practice I have witnessed, in such circumstances, the display of heroism and fortitude ennobling to human nature; and I have also seen instances of the most contemptible pusillanimity. I have marked a brave spirit succeed in buffeting its way out of its adversities; and I have seen as brave a one over-

* —— And now behold, O Gertrude, Gertrude—
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions.—Shakspeare.

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come by them, and falling vanquished, even with the sword of resolution gleaming in its grasp; for there *are* combinations of evil, against which no human energies can make a stand. Of this, I think, the ensuing melancholy narrative will afford an illustration. What its effect on the mind of the reader may be, I cannot presume to speculate. *Mine* it has oppressed to recall the painful scenes with which it abounds, and convinced of the peculiar perils incident to rapidly acquired fortune, which too often lifts its possessor into an element for which he is totally unfitted, and from which he falls exhausted, lower far than the sphere he had left!

Mr Dudleigh's career afforded a striking illustration of the splendid but fluctuating fortunes of a great English merchant—of the magnificent results insured by persevering industry, economy, prudence, and enterprise. Early in life he was cast upon the world, to do as he would, or rather *could*, with himself; for his guardian proved a swindler, and robbed his deceased friend's child of every penny that was left him. On hearing of the disastrous event, young Dudleigh instantly ran away from school, in his sixteenth year, and entered himself on board a vessel trading to the West Indies, as cabin-boy. As soon as his relatives, few in number, distant in degree, and colder in affection, heard of this step, they told him, after a little languid expostulation, that as he had made his bed, so he must lie upon it; and never came near him again, till he had become ten times richer than all of them put together.

The first three or four years of young Dudleigh's noviciate at sea, were years of fearful, but not unusual hardship. I have heard him state that he was frequently flogged by the captain and mate, till the blood ran down his back like water; and kicked and cuffed about by the common sailors with infamous impunity. One cause of all this was obvious: his evident superiority over every one on board in learning and acquirements. To such an extent did his tormentors carry their tyranny, that poor Dudleigh's life became intolerable; and one evening, on leaving the vessel after its arrival in port from the West Indies, he ran to a public-house in Wapping, called for pen and ink, and wrote a letter to the chief owner of the vessel, acquainting him of the cruel usage he had suffered, and imploring his interference; adding that, if that application failed, he was determined to drown himself when they next went to sea. This letter, which was signed "*Henry Dudleigh, cabin-boy*," astonished and interested the person to whom it was addressed: for it was accurately, and even eloquently worded. Young Dudleigh was sent for, and, after a thorough examination into the nature of his pretensions, engaged as a clerk in the counting-house of the shipowners, at a small salary. He conducted himself with so much ability and integrity, and displayed such a zealous interest in his employers' concerns, that in a few years' time he was raised to the head of their large establishment, and received a salary of £500 a-year, as their senior and confidential clerk. The experience he gained in this situation, enabled him, on the unexpected bankruptcy of his employers, to dispose most successfully of the greater portion of what he had saved in their service. He purchased shares in two vessels, which made fortunate voyages; and the result determined him henceforth to conduct business on his own account, notwithstanding the offer of a most lucrative situation similar to his last. In a word, he went on conducting his speculations with as much prudence, as he undertook them with energy and enterprise.

The period I am alluding to may be considered as the golden age of the shipping interest; and it will occasion surprise to no one acquainted with the commercial history of those days, to hear that, in little more than five years' time, Mr Dudleigh could "write himself" worth £20,000. He practised a parsimony of the most excruciating kind. Though every one on 'Change was familiar with his

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name, and cited him as one of the most "rising young men there," he never associated with any of them but on occasions of strict business. He was content with the humblest fare; and trudged cheerfully to and from the city to his quiet quarters near Hackney, as if he had been but a common clerk, luxuriating on an income of £50 per annum. Matters went on thus prospering with him till his thirty-second year, when he married the wealthy widow of a shipbuilder. The influence which she had in his future fortunes, warrants me in pausing to describe her. She * was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old; of passable person as far as figure went, for her face was rather bloated and vulgar; somewhat of a dowdy in dress; insufferably vain, and fond of extravagant display; a termagant; with little or no intellect. In fact, she was in disposition the perfect antipodes of her husband. Mr Dudleigh was a humble, unobtrusive, kind-hearted man, always intent on business, beyond which he did not pretend to know or care for much. How could such a man, it will be asked, marry such a woman?—Was he the *first* who had been dazzled and blinded by the blaze of a large fortune? Such was his case. Besides, a young widow is somewhat careful of undue exposures, which might fright away promising suitors. So they made a match of it; and he resuscitated the expiring business and connexion of his predecessor, and conducted it with a skill and energy which, in a short time, opened upon him the flood-gates of fortune. Affluence poured in from all quarters; and he was everywhere called, by his panting but distanced competitors in the city, the "*fortunate* Mr Dudleigh."

One memorable day four of his vessels, richly freighted, came, almost together, into port; and, on the same day, he made one of the most fortunate speculations in the funds which had been heard of for years; so that he was able to say to his assembled family, as he drank their healths after dinner, that he would not take *a quarter of a million* for what he was worth! And there, surely, he might have paused, nay, made his final stand, as the possessor of such a princely fortune, acquired with unsullied honour to himself, and, latterly, spent in warrantable splendour and hospitality. But no: as is, and ever will be the case, the more he had the more he would have. Not to mention the incessant baiting of his ambitious wife, the dazzling capabilities of indefinite increase to his wealth proved irresistible. *What* might not be done by a man of Mr Dudleigh's celebrity, with a *floating* capital of some hundred and fifty thousand pounds, and as much credit as he chose to accept of? The regular course of his shipping business brought him in constantly magnificent returns, and he began to sigh after other collateral sources of money-making; for why should nearly one-half of his vast means lie unproductive? He had not long to look about, after it once became known that he was ready to employ his floating capital in profitable speculations. The brokers, for instance, came about him, and he leagued with them. By and by, the world heard of a monopoly of nutmegs. There was not a score to be had anywhere in London, but at a most exorbitant price—for the fact was, that Mr Dudleigh had laid his hands on them all, and, by so doing, cleared a very large sum. Presently he would play similar pranks with *otto of roses;* and, as soon as he had quadrupled the cost of that fashionable article, he would let loose his stores on the gaping market; by which he gained as large a profit as he had made with the nutmegs. Commercial people will easily see how he did this. The brokers, who wished to effect the monopoly, would apply to him for the use of his capital, and give him an ample indemnity against whatever loss might be the fate of the speculation; and, on its proving successful, rewarded him with a very large proportion of the profits. This is the scheme by which many splen-

* "*Mistress Buxom* (!) flotait entre trente et quarante ans," &c.—*French Translator.*

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did fortunes have been raised, with a rapidity which has astonished their gainers as much as any one else! Then, again, he negotiated bills on a large scale, and at tremendous discounts; and, in a word, by these and similar means, amassed, in a few years, the enormous sum of half a million of money!

It is easy to guess at the concomitants of such a fortune as this. At the instigation of his wife—for he himself retained all his old unobtrusive and personally economical habits—he supported two splendid establishments—the one at the "West End" of the town, and the other near Richmond. His wife—for Mr Dudleigh himself seemed more like the *hired steward* of his fortune than its possessor—was soon surrounded by swarms of those titled blood-suckers, that batten on bloated opulence, which has been floated into the sea of fashion. Mrs Dudleigh's dinners, suppers, routs, *soirées*, *fêtes-champêtres*, flashed astonishment on the town, through the columns of the obsequious prints. Miss Dudleigh, an elegant and really amiable girl about seventeen, was beginning to get talked of as a fashionable beauty, and, report said, had refused her coronets by dozens!—while "young Harry Dudleigh" far outtopped the astonished Oxonians, by spending half as much again as his noble allowance. Poor Mr Dudleigh frequently looked on all this with fear and astonishment, and, when in the city, would shrug his shoulders, and speak of the "*dreadful* doings at the West!" I say, when in the city—for as soon as he travelled westwards, when he entered the sphere of his WIFE's influence, his energies were benumbed and paralysed. He had too long quietly succumbed to her authority, to call it in question now, and therefore he submitted to the splendid appearance he was compelled to support. He often said, however, that "he could not understand what Mrs Dudleigh *was at;*" but beyond such a hint he never presumed. He was seldom or never to be seen amid the throng and crush of company that crowded his house evening after evening. The first arrival of his wife's guests was his usual signal for seizing his hat and stick, dropping quietly from home, and betaking himself either to some sedate city friend, or to his counting-house, where he now took a kind of morbid pleasure in ascertaining that his gains were safe, and planning greater, to make up, if possible, he would say, "for Mrs Dudleigh's awful extravagance." He did this so constantly, that Mrs Dudleigh began at last to *expect* and calculate on his absence as a matter of course, whenever she gave a party; and her good-natured, accommodating husband, too easily acquiesced, on the ground, as his wife took care to give out, of his *health's* not bearing late hours and company. Though an economical, and even parsimonious man in his habits, Mr Dudleigh had as warm and kind a heart as ever glowed in the breast of man. I have heard many accounts of his systematic benevolence, which he chiefly carried into effect at the periods of temporary *relegation* to the city above spoken of. Every Saturday evening, for instance, he had a sort of levee, numerously attended by merchants' clerks and commencing tradesmen, all of whom he assisted most liberally with both "cash and counsel," as he good-humouredly called it. Many a one of them owes his establishment in life to Mr Dudleigh, who never lost sight of any deserving object he had once served.

A far different creature Mrs Dudleigh! The longer she lived, the more she had her way—the more frivolous and heartless did she become—the more despotic was the sway she exercised over her husband. Whenever he presumed to "lecture her," as she called it, she would stop his mouth, with referring to the fortune she had brought him, and ask him triumphantly, "what he could have done without her cash and connexions?" Such being the fact, it was past all controversy that she ought to be allowed "to have her *fling*, now they could so easily afford it!" The sums she spent on her own and her daughter's dresses were absolutely

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incredible, and almost petrified her poor husband when the bills were brought to him. Both in the articles of dress and party-giving, Mrs Dudleigh was actuated by a spirit of frantic rivalry with her competitors; and what she wanted in elegance and refinement, she sought to compensate for in extravagance and ostentation. It was to no purpose that her trembling husband, with tears in his eyes, suggested to her recollection the old saying, "that fools make feasts, and wise men eat them;" and that, if she gave magnificent dinners and suppers, of course great people would come and eat them for her; but would they thank her? Her constant answer was, that they "ought to support their station in society"—that "the world would not believe them rich, unless they showed it that they were," &c. &c. Then, again, she had a strong plea for her enormous expenditure in the "bringing out of Miss Dudleigh," in the arrayment of whom, panting milliners "toiled in vain." In order to bring about this latter object, she induced, but with great difficulty, Mr Dudleigh to give his bankers orders to accredit her separate cheques; and so prudently did she avail herself of this privilege for months, that she completely threw Mr Dudleigh off his guard, and he allowed a very large balance to lie in his bankers' hands, subject to the unrestricted drafts of his wife. Did the reader never happen to see in society that horrid harpy, an old dowager, whose niggard jointure drives her to cards? Evening after evening did several of these old creatures squat, toad-like, round Mrs Dudleigh's card-table, and succeeded at last in inspiring her with such a frenzy for "PLAY," as the most ample fortune must melt away under, more rapidly than snow beneath sunbeams. The infatuated woman became notoriously the first to seek, and last to leave, the fatal card-table; and the reputed readiness with which she "bled," at last brought her the honour of an old countess, who condescended to win from her, at two sittings, very nearly £5000. It is not now difficult to account for the anxiety Mrs Dudleigh manifested to banish her husband from her parties. She had many ways of satisfactorily accounting for her frequent drafts on his bankers. Miss Dudleigh had made a conquest of a young peer, who, as soon as he had accurately ascertained the reality of her vast expectations, fell deeply in love with her! The young lady herself had too much good sense to give him spontaneous credit for disinterested affection, but she was so dunned on the subject by her foolish mother—so petted and flattered by the noble, but impoverished family that sought her connexion—and the young nobleman, himself a handsome man, so ardent and persevering in his courtship—that at last her heart yielded, and she passed in society as the "envied object of his affections!" The notion of intermingling their blood with NOBILITY, so dazzled the vain imagination of Mrs Dudleigh, that it gave her eloquence enough to succeed, at last, in stirring the phlegmatic temperament of her husband. "Have a *nobleman* for MY SON-IN-LAW!" thought the merchant, morning, noon, and night—at the East and at the West End—in town and country! What would the city people say to that? He had a spice of ambition in his composition, beyond what could be contented with the achieval of mere city eminence. He was tiring of it—he had long been a kind of *king* on 'Change, and, as it were, carried the stocks in his pockets. He had long thought that it was "possible to choke a dog with pudding," and he was growing heartily wearied of the turtle* and venison eastward of Temple Bar, which he was compelled to eat at the public dinners of the great companies, and elsewhere, when his own tastes would have led him, in every case, to pitch upon "port, beef-steaks, and the papers," as fare fit for a king! The dazzling topic, therefore, on which his wife held forth with unwearied eloquence, was beginning to produce conviction in his mind; and though he himself eschewed his wife's kind of life,

* "Dons tous les repas solennels de la cité de Londres, une *soupe à la tortue* est de rigueur!"—*French Translator.*

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and refused to share in it, he did not lend a very unwilling ear to her representations of the necessity for an even increased rate of expenditure, to enable Miss Dudleigh to eclipse her gay competitors, and appear a worthy prize in the eyes of her noble suitor. Aware of the magnitude of the proposed object, he could not but assent to Mrs Dudleigh's opinion, that extraordinary means must be made use of; and was at last persuaded into placing nearly £20,000 in his new banker's hands, subject, as before, to Mrs Dudleigh's drafts, which she promised him should be as seldom and as moderate as she could possibly contrive to meet necessary expenses with. His many and heavy expenses, together with the great sacrifice in prospect, when the time of his daughter's marriage should arrive, supplied him with new incentives to enter into commercial speculations. He tried several new schemes, threw all the capital he could command into new and even more productive quarters, and calculated on making vast accessions of fortune at the end of the year.

About a fortnight after Mr Dudleigh had informed Mrs Dudleigh of the new lodgment he had made at his banker's, she gave a very large evening party at her house in —— Square. She had been very successful in her guests on the occasion, having engaged the attendance of my Lords *This*, and my Ladies *That*, innumerable. Even the high and haughty Duke of —— had deigned to look in for a few moments, on his way to a party at Carlton House, for the purpose of sneering at the "splendid cit," and extracting topics of laughter for his royal host. The whole of —— Square, and one or two of the adjoining streets, were absolutely choked with carriages—the carriages of HER guests! When you entered her magnificent apartments, and had made your way through the soft crush and flutter of aristocracy, you might see the lady of the house throbbing and panting with excitement—a perfect blaze of jewellery—flanked by her very kind friends, old Lady ——, and the well-known Miss ——, engaged, as usual, at unlimited loo. The good humour with which Mrs Dudleigh lost, was declared to be "quite charming"—"deserving of better fortune;" and, inflamed by the cayenned compliments they forced upon her, she was just uttering some sneering and insolent allusion to "that odious *city*," while old Lady ——'s withered talons were extended to clutch her winnings, when there was perceived a sudden stir about the chief door—then a general hush—and, in a moment or two, a gentleman, in dusty and disordered dress, with his hat on, rushed through the astonished crowd, and made his way towards the card-table at which Mrs Dudleigh was seated, and stood confronting her, extending towards her his right hand, in which was a thin slip of paper. It was Mr Dudleigh! "There—there, madam!" he gasped in a hoarse voice—"there, woman!—what have you done?—Ruined—ruined me, madam—you've *ruined* me! My credit is destroyed for ever!—my name is tainted. Here's the first dishonoured bill that ever bore Henry Dudleigh's name upon it!—Yes, madam, it is YOU who have done it!" he continued, with vehement tone and gesture, utterly regardless of the breathless throng around him, and continuing to extend towards her the protested bill of exchange.

"My dear!—my dear—my—my—my dear Mr Dudleigh," stammered his wife, without rising from her chair, "what is the matter, love?"

"*Matter*, madam?—why, by ——!—that you've ruined me—that's all! Where's the £20,000 I placed in Messrs ——'s hands a few days ago? Where—WHERE is it, Mrs Dudleigh?" he continued, almost shouting, and advancing nearer to her with his fist clenched.

"Henry!—dear Henry!—mercy, mercy!"——murmured his wife faintly.

"Henry, indeed! *Mercy?*—Silence, madam! How dare you deny me an answer? How *dare* you swindle me out of my fortune in this way?" he continued, fiercely wiping the perspiration from his forehead: "Here's my bill for £4000, made payable at Messrs ——, my new bankers; and when it

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was presented this morning, madam, by ——! the reply was, 'NO EFFECTS!' and my bill has been dishonoured! Wretch! *what* have you done with my money? Where is it all gone?—I'm the town's talk about this —— bill! There'll be a run upon me!—I know there will—ay—THIS is the way my hard-earned wealth is squandered, you vile, you unprincipled spendthrift!" he continued, turning round and pointing to the astounded guests, none of whom had uttered a syllable. The music had ceased—the dancers left their places—the card-tables were deserted—in a word, all was blank consternation. The fact was, that old Lady ——, who was that moment seated, trembling like an aspen leaf, at Mrs Dudleigh's right-hand side, had won from her, during the last month, a series of sums amounting to little short of £9000, which Mrs Dudleigh had paid the day before, by a cheque on her banker; and, that very morning, she had drawn out £4000 odd, to pay her coachmaker's, confectioner's, and milliner's bills, and supply herself with cash for the evening's spoliation. The remaining £7000 had been drawn out during the preceding fortnight, to pay her various clamorous creditors, and keep her in readiness for the gaming table. Mr Dudleigh, on hearing of the dishonour of his bill—the news of which was brought him by a clerk, for he was staying at a friend's house in the country—came up instantly to town, paid the bill, and then hurried, half beside himself, to his house in —— Square. It is not at all wonderful, that, though Mr Dudleigh's name was well known as an eminent and responsible mercantile man, his bankers, with whom he had but recently opened an account, should decline paying his bill, after so large a sum as £20,000 had been drawn out of their hands by Mrs Dudleigh. It looked suspicious enough, truly!

"Mrs Dudleigh! where—WHERE is my £20,000?" he shouted almost at the top of his voice; but Mrs Dudleigh heard him not, for she had fallen fainting into the arms of Lady ——. Numbers rushed forward to her assistance. The confusion and agitation that ensued it would be impossible to describe; and in the midst of it, Mr Dudleigh strode, at a furious pace, out of the room, and left the house. For the next three or four days he behaved like a madman. His apprehensions magnified the temporary and very trifling injury his credit had sustained, till he fancied himself on the eve of becoming bankrupt. And, indeed, where is the merchant of any eminence, whom such a circumstance as the dishonour of a bill for £4000 (however afterwards accounted for) would not exasperate? For several days Mr Dudleigh would not go near —— Square, and did not once inquire after Mrs Dudleigh. My professional services were put into requisition on her behalf. Rage, shame, and agony, at the thought of the disgraceful exposure she had met with, in the eyes of all her assembled guests—of those respecting whose opinions she was most exquisitely sensitive—had nearly driven her distracted. She continued so ill for about a week, and exhibited such frequent glimpses of delirium, that I was compelled to resort to very active treatment to avert a brain fever. More than once, I heard her utter the words, or something like them—"be *revenged* on him yet!" but whether or not she was at the time sensible of the import of what she said, I did not know.

The incident above recorded—which I had from the lips of Mr Dudleigh himself, as well as from others—made a good deal of noise in what are called "the fashionable circles," and was obscurely hinted at in one of the daily papers. I was much amused at hearing, in the various circles I visited, the conflicting and exaggerated accounts of it. One old lady told me she "had it on the best authority that Mr Dudleigh actually *struck* his wife, and wrenched her purse out of her hand!" I recommended Mrs Dudleigh to withdraw for a few weeks to a watering place, and she followed my advice; taking with her Miss Dudleigh, whose health and spirits had suffered materially through the event which has been mentioned. Poor

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girl! she was of a very different mould from her mother, and suffered acutely, though silently, at witnessing the utter contempt in which her mother was held by the very people she made such prodigious efforts to court and conciliate. Can any situation be conceived more painful? Her few and gentle remonstrances, however, met invariably with a harsh and cruel reception; and, at last, she was compelled to hold her peace, and bewail, in mortified silence, her mother's obtuseness.

They continued at ——— about a month; and, on their return to town, found the affair quite "blown over;" and soon afterwards, through the mediation of mutual friends, the angry couple were reconciled to each other. For twelve long months, Mrs Dudleigh led a comparatively quiet and secluded life, abstaining—with but a poor grace, it is true—from company and cards—from the latter compulsorily; for no one chose to sit down at play with her, who had witnessed or heard of the event which had taken place last season. In short, everything seemed going on well with our merchant and his family. It was fixed that his daughter was to become Lady —— as soon as young Lord —— should have returned from the Continent; and a dazzling dowry was spoke of as hers on the day of her marriage. Pleased with his wife's good behaviour, Mr Dudleigh's confidence and good-nature revived, and he held the reins with a rapidly slackening grasp. In proportion as he allowed her funds, her scared "friends" flocked again around her; and, by and by, she was seen flouncing about in fashion as heretofore, with small "let or hindrance" from her husband. The world—the sagacious world—called Mr Dudleigh a happy man; and the city swelled at the mention of his name and doings. The mercantile world laid its highest honours at his feet. The Mayoralty—a Bank, an East Indian Directorship—a seat for the city in Parliament—all glittered within his grasp—but he would not stretch forth his hand. He was content, he would say, to be "plain Henry Dudleigh, whose word was as good as his bond"—a leading man on 'Change — and, above all, "who could look every one full in the face with whom he had ever had to do." He was, indeed, a worthy man—a rich and racy specimen of one of those glories of our nation — a true English merchant. The proudest moments of his life were those, when an accompanying friend could estimate his consequence, by witnessing the mandarin movements that everywhere met him—the obsequious obeisances of even his closest rivals—as he hurried to and fro about the central regions of 'Change, his hands stuck into the worn pockets of his plain snuff-coloured coat. The merest glance at Mr Dudleigh—his hurried, fidgety, anxious gestures—the keen, cautious expression of his glittering grey eyes—his mouth, screwed up like a shut purse—all, all told of the "man of a million." There was, in a manner, a "plum" in every tread of his foot, in every twinkle of his eye. He could never be said to breathe freely—really to *live*—but in his congenial atmosphere—his native element—the city!

Once every year he gave a capital dinner, at a tavern, to all his agents, clerks, and people in any way connected with him in business; and none but himself knew the quiet ecstasy with which he took his seat at the head of them all, joined in their timid jokes, echoed their modest laughter, made speeches, and was be-speechified in turn! How he sat while great things were saying of him, on the occasion of his health's being drunk! On one of these occasions, his health had been proposed by his sleek head-clerk, in a most neat and appropriate speech, and drunk with uproarious enthusiasm; and good Mr Dudleigh was on his legs, energetically making his annual avowal, that "that was the proudest moment of his life," when one of the waiters came and interrupted him, by saying that a gentleman was without, waiting to speak to him on most important business. Mr Dudleigh hurriedly whispered that he would attend to the stranger in a few minutes, and the waiter withdrew;

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but returned in a second or two, and put a card into his hand. Mr Dudleigh was electrified at the name it bore—that of the great loan-contractor—the city Crœsus, whose wealth was reported to be incalculable! He hastily called on some one to supply his place; and had hardly passed the door, before he was hastily shaken by the hands by ——, who told him at once that he had called to propose to Mr Dudleigh to take part with him in negotiating a very large loan on account of the —— Government! After a flurried pause, Mr Dudleigh, scarcely knowing what he was saying, assented. In a day or two, the transaction was duly blazoned in the leading papers of the day; and every one in the city spoke of him as one likely to double, or even treble, his already ample fortune. Again he was praised—again censured—again envied! It was considered advisable that he should repair to the Continent, during the course of the negotiation, in order that he might personally superintend some important collateral transactions: and when there, he was most unexpectedly detained nearly two months. Alas! that he ever left England! During his absence, his infatuated wife betook herself—"like the dog to his vomit, like the sow to her wallowing in the mire"—to her former ruinous courses of extravagance and dissipation, but on a fearfully larger scale. Her house was more like an hotel than a private dwelling; and blazed away, night after night, with light and company, till the whole neighbourhood complained of the incessant uproar occasioned by the mere arrival and departure of her guests. To her other dreadful besetments, Mrs Dudleigh now added the odious and vulgar vice of—intoxication! She complained of the deficiency of her animal spirits; and said she took liquor as a *medicine!* She required stimulus and excitement, she said, to sustain her mind under the perpetual run of ill luck she had at cards! It was in vain that her poor daughter remonstrated, and almost cried herself into fits, on seeing her mother return home, frequently in the dull stupor of absolute intoxication! "Mother, mother, my heart is breaking!" said she, one evening.

"So—so is mine," hiccupped her parent; "so, get me the decanter!"

Young Harry Dudleigh trode emulously in the footsteps of his mother; and ran riot to an extent that was before unknown to Oxford! The sons of very few of the highest nobility had handsomer allowances than he; yet was he constantly over head and ears in debt. He was a backer of the ring ruffians; a great man at cock and dog fights; a racer; in short, a blackguard of the first water. During the recess, he had come up to town and taken up his quarters, not at his father's house, but at one of the distant hotels, where he might pursue his profligate courses without fear of interruption. He had repeatedly bullied his mother out of large sums of money to supply his infamous extravagances; and, at length, became so insolent and exorbitant in his demands, that they quarrelled. One evening, about nine o'clock, Mrs and Miss Dudleigh happened to be sitting in the drawing-room, alone—and the latter was pale with the agitation consequent on some recent quarrel with her mother; for the poor girl had been passionately reproaching her mother for her increasing attachment to liquor, under the influence of which she evidently was at that moment. Suddenly a voice was heard in the hall, and on the stairs singing, or rather bawling, snatches of some comic song or other: the drawing-room door was presently pushed open, and young Dudleigh, more than half intoxicated, made his appearance in a slovenly evening dress.

"Madame ma mère!" said he, staggering towards the sofa, where his mother and sister were sitting—"I—I *must* be supplied—I must, mother!" he hiccupped, stretching towards her his right hand, and tapping the palm of it significantly with his left fingers.

"Poh—nonsense!—off to—to bed, young scapegrace!" replied his mo-

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ther drowsily, for the stupor of wine lay heavily on her.

"'Tis useless, madam—quite, I assure you!—Money—money—money I must and will have!" said her son, striving to steady himself against a chair.

"Why, Harry, dear!—where's the fifty pounds I gave you a cheque for only a day or two ago?"

"Gone! gone the way of all money, madam—as you know pretty well! I—I *must* have £300 by to-morrow"——

"*Three hundred pounds*, Henry!" exclaimed his mother, angrily.

"Yes, ma'am! Sir Charles won't be put off any longer, he says. Has my—my—word—'good as my bond'—as the old governor says! Mother," he continued, in a louder tone, flinging his hat violently on the floor, "I must and WILL have money!"

"Henry, it's disgraceful—infamous—most infamous!" exclaimed Miss Dudleigh, with a shocked air; and raising her handkerchief to her eyes, she rose from the sofa, and walked hurriedly to the opposite end of the room, and sat down in tears. Poor girl!—what a mother! what a brother! The young man took the place she had occupied by her mother's side, and, in a wheedling, coaxing way, threw his arm around Mrs Dudleigh, hiccupping—"Mother, give me a cheque!—do, please!—'tis the last time I'll ask you, for a twelvemonth to come!—and I owe £500 that *must* be paid in a day or two!"

"How can I, Harry? Dear Harry, don't be unreasonable! recollect I'm a kind mother to you," kissing him, "and don't distress me, for I owe three or four times as much myself, and cannot pay it."

"Eh! eh! cannot pay it!—stuff! ma'am! Why, is the bank run dry?" he continued, with an apprehensive stare.

"Yes, love, long ago!" replied his mother with a sigh.

"Whoo, whoo!" he exclaimed; and, rising, he walked, or rather staggered a few steps to and fro, as if attempting to collect his faculties, and think!

"Ah, ha, ha! eureka, ma'am!" he exclaimed suddenly after a pause, snapping his fingers, "I've got it—I have! the PLATE, mother! the plate—Hem! raising the wind; you understand me!"

"Oh, shocking, shocking!" sobbed Miss Dudleigh, hurrying towards them, wringing her hands bitterly; "O mother! O Henry, Henry! would you ruin my poor father, and break his heart?"

"Ah, the plate, mother! the plate!" he continued, addressing his mother; then turning to his sister, "Away, you little puss, puss! what do *you* understand about business, eh!" and he attempted to kiss her, but she thrust him away with indignation and horror in her gestures.

"Come, mother!—Will it do? A lucky thought! The plate! Mr —— is a rare hand at this kind of thing—a thousand or two would set you and me to rights in a twinkling! Come, what say you?"

"Impossible, Harry!" replied his mother, turning pale, "'tis quite—'tis—'tis—out of the question!"

"Poh! no such thing! It *must* be done! Why cannot it, ma'am?" inquired the young man earnestly.

"Why, because, if you *must* know, sirrah! because it is ALREADY pawned!" replied his mother in a loud voice, shaking her hand at him with passion. Their attention was attracted at that moment towards the door, which had been standing ajar,—for there was the sound of some one suddenly fallen down. After an instant's pause, they all three walked to the door, and stood gazing horror-struck at the prostrate figure of Mr DUDLEIGH!

He had been standing unperceived in the doorway—having entered the house only a moment or two after his son—during the whole of the disgraceful scene just described, almost petrified with grief, amazement, and horror, till he could bear it no longer, and fell down in an apoplectic fit. He had but that evening returned from abroad, exhausted with physical fatigue, and dispirited in mind; for, while abroad, he had made a most disastrous move in the foreign funds,

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by which he lost upwards of sixty or seventy thousand pounds; and his negotiation scheme also turned out very unfortunately, and left him minus nearly as much more. He had hurried home, half dead with vexation and anxiety, to make instant arrangements for meeting the most pressing of his pecuniary engagements in England, apprehensive, from the gloomy tenor of his agent's letters to him while abroad, that his affairs were falling into confusion. Oh! what a heart-breaking scene had he to encounter, instead of the comforts and welcome of home!

This incident brought me again into contact with this devoted family; for I was summoned by the distracted daughter to her father's bedside, which I found surrounded by his wife and children. The shock of his presence had completely sobered both mother and son, who hung, horror-stricken over him, on each side of the bed, endeavouring in vain to recall him to sensibility. I had scarcely entered the room, before Mrs Dudleigh was carried away swooning in the arms of a servant. Mr Dudleigh was in a fit of apoplexy. He lay in a state of profound stupor, breathing stertorously—more like snorting. I had him raised into nearly an upright position, and immediately bled him largely from the jugular vein. While the blood was flowing, my attention was arrested by the appearance of young Dudleigh, who was kneeling down by the bedside, his hands clasped convulsively together, and his swollen blood-shot eyes fixed on his father. "Father! father! father!" were the only words he uttered, and these fell quivering from his lips unconsciously. Miss Dudleigh, who had stood leaning against the bedpost in stupefied silence, and pale as a statue, was at length too faint to continue any longer in an upright posture, and was led out of the room. Here was misery! here was remorse!

I continued with my patient more than an hour, and was gratified at finding that there was every appearance of the attack proving a mild and manageable one. I prescribed suitable remedies, and left—enjoining young Dudleigh not to quit his father for a moment, but to watch every breath he drew. He hardly seemed to hear me, and gazed in my face vacantly while I addressed him. I shook him gently, and repeated my injunctions; but all he could reply was—"Oh—doctor—we have killed him!"

Before leaving the house, I repaired to the chamber where Mrs Dudleigh lay, just recovering from strong hysterics. I was filled with astonishment, on reflecting upon the whole scene of that evening; and, in particular, on the appearance and remorseful expressions of young Dudleigh. What could have happened?—A day or two afterwards, Miss Dudleigh, with shame and reluctance, communicated to me the chief facts above stated! Her own health and spirits were manifestly suffering from the distressing scenes she had to endure. She told me with energy that she could sink into the earth, on reflecting that she was the daughter of such a mother, the sister of such a brother!

[The Diary passes hastily over a fortnight—saying merely that Mr Dudleigh recovered more rapidly than could have been expected—and proceeds—]

*Monday, June* 18.—While I was sitting beside poor Mr Dudleigh, this afternoon, feeling his pulse, and putting questions to him, which he was able to answer with tolerable distinctness, Miss Dudleigh came and whispered that her mother—who, though she had seen her husband frequently, had not spoken to him, or been recognised by him since his illness—was anxious then to come in, as she heard that he was perfectly sensible. I asked him if he had any objections to see her; and he replied with a sigh—"No. Let her come in, and see what she has brought me to!" In a few minutes' time she was in the room. I observed Mr Dudleigh's eyes directed anxiously to the door before she entered; and the instant he saw her pallid features, and the languid exhausted air with which she advanced towards the bed,

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he lifted up his shaking hands, and beckoned towards her. His eyes filled with tears, to overflowing, and he attempted to speak—but in vain. She tottered to his side, and fell down on her knees; while he clasped her hands in his, kissed her affectionately, and both of them wept like children; as did young Dudleigh and his sister. That was the hour of full forgiveness and reconciliation! It was indeed a touching scene. There lay the deeply injured father and husband, his grey hair (grown long during his absence on the Continent, and his illness) combed back from his temples; his pale and fallen features exhibiting deep traces of the anguish he had borne. He gave one hand to his son and daughter, while the other continued grasped by Mrs Dudleigh.

"Oh, dear, dear husband!—Can you forgive us, who have so nearly broken your heart?"—she sobbed, kissing his forehead. He strove to reply, but burst into tears, without being able to utter a word. Fearful that the prolonged excitement of such an interview might prove injurious, I gave Mrs Dudleigh a hint to withdraw—and left the room with her. She had scarcely descended the staircase, when she suddenly seized my arm, stared me full in the face, and burst into a fit of loud and wild laughter. I carried her into the first room I could find, and gave her all the assistance in my power. It was long, however, before she recovered. She continually exclaimed—"Oh, what a wretch I've been!—What a vile wretch I've been!—and he so kind and forgiving too!"

As soon as Mr Dudleigh was sufficiently recovered to leave his bedroom—contrary to my vehemently expressed opinion—he entered at once on the active management of his affairs. It is easy to conceive how business of such an extensive and complicated character as his must have suffered from so long an intermission of his personal superintendence—especially at such a critical conjuncture. Though his head-clerk was an able and faithful man, he was not at all equal to the overwhelming task which devolved upon him; and when Mr Dudleigh, the first day of his coming down stairs, sent for him, in order to learn the general aspect of his affairs, he wrung his hands despairingly, to find the lamentable confusion into which they had fallen. The first step to be taken, was the discovery of funds wherewith to meet some heavy demands which had been, for some time, clamorously asserted. What, however, was to be done? His unfortunate speculations in the foreign funds had made sad havoc of his floating capital; and further fluctuations in the English funds, during his illness, had added to his losses. As far as *ready money* went, therefore, he was comparatively penniless. All his resources were so locked up, as to be promptly available only at ruinous sacrifices; and yet he *must* procure many thousands within a few days—or he trembled to contemplate the consequences.

"Call in the money I advanced on mortgage of my Lord ——'s property," said he.

"We shall lose a third, sir, of what we advanced if we do," replied the clerk.

"Can't help it, sir, *must* have money—and that instantly—call it in, sir." The clerk, with a sigh, entered his orders accordingly.

"Ah—let me see. Sell all my shares in ——."

"Allow me to suggest, sir, that, if you will but wait two months, or even six weeks longer, they will be worth twenty times what you gave for them; whereas, if you part with them at present, it must be at a heavy discount."

"*Must* have money, sir! must!—write *it* down too," replied Mr Dudleigh sternly. In this manner he "ticketed out his property for ruin," as his clerk said—throughout the interview. His demeanour and spirit were altogether changed; the first was become stern and imperative, the latter rash and inconsiderate, to a degree which none would credit, who had known his former mode of conducting business. All the prudence and energy which had secured him

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such splendid results, seemed now lost, irrecoverably lost. Whether or not this change was to be accounted for by mental imbecility consequent on his recent apoplectic seizure, or the disgust he felt at toiling in the accumulation of wealth which had been, and might yet be, so profligately squandered, I know not; but his conduct now consisted of alternations between the extremes of rashness and timorous indecision. He would waver and hesitate about the outlay of hundreds, when every one else—even those most proverbially prudent and sober—would venture their thousands with an almost absolute certainty of tenfold profits; and again, would fling away thousands into the very yawning jaws of villany. He would not tolerate remonstrance or expostulation; and, when any one ventured to hint surprise or dissatisfaction at the conduct he was pursuing, he would say tartly, "that he had reasons of his own for what he was doing." His brother merchants were, for a length of time, puzzled to account for his conduct. At first, they gave him credit for playing some deep and desperate game, and trembled at his hardihood; but, after waiting a while, and perceiving no

——wondrous issue
Leapt down their gaping throats, to recompense
Long hours of patient hope——

they came to the conclusion, that, as he had been latterly unfortunate, and was growing old, and indisposed to prolong the doubtful cares of money-making, he had determined to draw his affairs into as narrow a compass as possible, with a view to withdrawing altogether from active life, on a handsome independence. Every one commended his prudence in so acting—"in letting well alone." "Easy come, easy go," is an old saw, but signally characteristic of rapidly acquired commercial fortunes; and by these, and similar prudential considerations, did they consider Mr Dudleigh to be actuated. This latter supposition was strengthened by observing the other parts of his conduct. His domestic arrangements indicated a spirit of rigorous retrenchment. His house near Richmond was advertised for sale, and bought, "out and out," by a man who had grown rich in Mr Dudleigh's service. Mrs Dudleigh gave, received, and accepted fewer and fewer invitations: was less seen at public places; and drove only in one plain chariot. Young Dudleigh's allowance at Oxford was curtailed, and narrowed down to £300 a-year; and he was forbidden to go abroad, that he might stay at home to prepare for—orders! There was nothing questionable or alarming in all this, even to the most forward quidnuncs of the city. The world that had blazoned and lauded his, or rather his *family's* extravagance, now commended his judicious economy. As for himself, personally, he had resumed his pristine clockwork punctuality of movements; and the only difference to be perceived in his behaviour was an air of unceasing thoughtfulness and reserve. This was accounted for, by the rumoured unhappiness he endured in his family—for which Mrs Dudleigh was given ample credit. And then his favourite—his idolised child—Miss Dudleigh—was exhibiting alarming symptoms of ill health. She was notoriously neglected by her young and noble suitor, who continued abroad much longer than the period he had himself fixed on. She was of too delicate and sensitive a character, to hear with indifference the impertinent and cruel speculations which this occasioned in "society." When I looked at her—her beauty, her amiable and fascinating manners, her high accomplishments—and, in many conversations, perceived the superior feelings of her soul—it was with difficulty I brought myself to believe that she was the offspring of such a miserably inferior woman as her mother. To return, however, to Mr Dudleigh: He who has once experienced an attack of apoplexy, ought never to be entirely from under medical *surveillance*. I was in the habit of calling upon him



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once or twice a-week, to ascertain how he was going on. I observed a great change in him. Though never distinguished by high animal spirits, he seemed now under the influence of a permanent and increasing melancholy. When I would put to him some such matter-of-fact question as—"How goes the world with you now, Mr Dudleigh?" he would reply with an air of lassitude—

"Oh, as it *ought!* as it ought." He ceased to speak of his mercantile transactions with spirit or energy; and it was only by a visible *effort* that he dragged himself into the city.

When a man is once on the *inclined plane* of life—once fairly "going down hill"—one push will do as much as fifty; and such a one poor Mr Dudleigh was not long in receiving. Rumours were already flying about, that his credit had no more substantial support than *paper* props; in other words, that he was obliged to resort to accommodation bills to meet his engagements. When once such reports are current and accredited, I need hardly say, that it is "all up" with a man in the city. And ought it not to be so? I observed, a little while ago, that Mr Dudleigh, since his illness, conducted his affairs very differently from what he had formerly. He would freight his vessels with unmarketable cargoes, in spite of all the representations of his servants and friends; and, when his advices confirmed the truth of their surmises, he would order the goods to be sold off, frequently at a fifth or eighth of their value. These, and many similar freaks, becoming generally known, soon alienated from him the confidence even of his oldest connexions; credit was given him reluctantly, and then only to a small extent—and sometimes even point-blank refused! He bore all this with apparent calmness, observing simply that "times were altered!" Still he had a *corps de reserve* in his favourite investiture—mortgages; a species of security in which he long had locked up some forty or fifty thousand pounds. Anxious to assign a mortgage for £15,000, he had at last succeeded in finding an assignee on advantageous terms, whose solicitor, after carefully inspecting the deed, pronounced it so much waste paper, owing to some great technical flaw, or informality, which vitiated the whole. Poor Mr Dudleigh hurried with consternation to his attorney; who, after a long show of incredulity, at last acknowledged the existence of the defect! Under his advice, Mr Dudleigh instantly wrote to the party whose property was mortgaged, frankly informing him of the circumstance, and appealing to his "honour and good feeling." He might as well have appealed to the winds! for he received a reply from the mortgager's attorney, stating simply, that "his client was prepared to stand or fall by the deed, and so, of course, must the mortgager!" What was Mr Dudleigh's utter dismay at finding, on further examination, that every mortgage transaction—except one for £1500—which had been intrusted to the management of the same attorney, was equally, or even more invalid than the one above mentioned! Two of the heaviest proved to be worthless, as *second* mortgages of the same property, and all the remainder were invalid, on account of divers defects and informalities. It turned out that Mr Dudleigh had been in the hands of a swindler, who had intentionally committed the draft error, and colluded with his principal, to outwit his unsuspecting client, Mr Dudleigh, in the matter of the double mortgages! Mr Dudleigh instantly commenced actions against the first mortgager, to recover the money he had advanced, in spite of the flaw in the mortgage deed, and against the attorney through whose villany he had suffered so severely. In the former—which, of course, decided the fate of the remaining mortgages similarly situated—he failed; in the latter, he succeeded, as far as the bare gaining of a verdict could be so considered; but the attorney, exasperated at being brought before the court and exposed by his client, defended the action in such a manner as did himself no good, at the same time

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that it nearly ruined the poor plaintiff; for he raked up every circumstance that had come to his knowledge professionally, during the course of several years' confidential connection with Mr Dudleigh, and which could possibly be tortured into a disreputable shape; and gave his foul brief into the hands of an ambitious young counsel, who, faithful to his instructions, and eager to make the most of so rich an opportunity of vituperative declamation, contrived so to blacken poor Mr Dudleigh's character, by cunning, cruel inuendoes, asserting nothing, but *suggesting* everything vile and atrocious, that poor Mr Dudleigh, who was in court at the time, began to think himself, in spite of himself, one of the most execrable scoundrels in existence; and hurried home in a paroxysm of rage, agony, and despair, which, but for my being opportunely sent for by Mrs Dudleigh, and bleeding him at once, must, in all probability, have induced a second and fatal apoplectic seizure. His energies, for weeks afterwards, lay in a state of complete stagnation; and I found he was sinking into the condition of an irrecoverable hypochondriac. Everything, from that time, went wrong with him. He made no provision for the payment of his regular debts; creditors precipitated their claims from all quarters; and he had no resources to fall back upon at a moment's exigency. Some of the more forbearing of his creditors kindly consented to give him time, but the small fry pestered him to distraction; and at last, one of the latter class, a rude, hard-hearted fellow, cousin to the attorney whom Mr Dudleigh had recently prosecuted, on receiving the requisite "denial," instantly went and struck the docket against his unfortunate debtor, and Mr Dudleigh—the celebrated Mr Dudleigh—became a BANKRUPT!

For some hours after he had received an official notification of the event, he seemed completely stunned. He did not utter a syllable when first informed of it; but his face assumed a ghastly paleness. He walked to and fro about the room—now pausing—then hurrying on—then pausing again, striking his hands on his forehead, and exclaiming, with an abstracted and incredulous air—"A bankrupt! a bankrupt! *Henry Dudleigh* a bankrupt! What are they saying on 'Change?" In subsequently describing to me his feelings at this period, he said he felt as though he had "fallen into his grave for an hour or two, and come out again cold and stupefied."

While he was in this state of mind, his daughter entered the room, wan and trembling with agitation.

"My dear little love, what's wrong? What's wrong, eh? What has dashed you, my sweet flower, eh?" said he, folding her in his arms, and hugging her to his breast. He led her to a seat, and placed her on his knee. He passed his hand over her pale forehead. "What have you been about to-day, Agnes? You've forgotten to dress your hair to-day," taking her raven tresses in his fingers—"Come, these must be curled! They are all damp, love! What makes you cry?"

"My dear, dear, dear, darling father!" sobbed the agonised girl, almost choked with her emotions—clasping her arms convulsively round his neck—"I love you dearer—a thousand times—than I ever loved you in my life!"

"My sweet love!" he exclaimed, bursting into tears. Neither of them spoke for several minutes.

"You are young, Agnes, and may be happy—but as for me, I am an old tree, whose roots are rotten! The blasts have beaten me down, my darling!" She clung closer to him, but spoke not. "Agnes, will you stay with me, now that I'm made a—a beggar? Will you? I can *love* you yet—but that's all!" said he, staring vacantly at her. After a pause, he suddenly released her from his knee, rose from his seat, and walked hurriedly about the room.

"Agnes, love! Why, is it true—is it really TRUE that I'm made a bankrupt of, after all? And is it come to that?" He resumed his seat, covered his face with his hands, and wept like a child. "'Tis for *you*, my darling—

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for my family—my children that I grieve! What is to become of you?" Again he paused. "Well! it cannot be helped—it is more my misfortune than my fault! God knows I've tried to pay my way as I went on—and—and—no, no! it doesn't follow that every man is a *villain* that's a bankrupt!"

"No, no, no, father!" replied his daughter, again flinging her arms round his neck, and kissing him with passionate fondness, "your honour is untouched—it is"——

"Ay, love—but to make the *world* think so—*There's* the rub! What has been said on 'Change to-day, Agnes? That's what hurts me to my soul!"

* * "Come, father, be calm! We shall yet be happy and quiet, after this little breeze has blown over! Oh, yes, yes, father! We will remove to a nice little comfortable house, and live among ourselves!"

"But, Agnes, can YOU do all this? Can *you* make up your mind to live in a lower rank—to—to—to be, in a manner, your own servant?"

"Yes, God knows, I can! Father, I'd rather be your servant-girl than wife of the king!" replied the poor girl with enthusiasm.

"Oh, my daughter!—Come, come, let us go into the next room, and do you play me my old favourite—'*O Nanny, wilt thou gang wi' me.*' You'll feel it, Agnes!" He led her into an adjoining room, and set her down at the instrument, and stood by her side.

"We must not part with this piano, my love—must we?" said she, putting her arms round his neck—"we'll try and have it saved from the wreck of our furniture!" She commenced playing the tune he had requested, and went through it.

"Sing, love—sing!" said her father. "I love the words as much as the music! Would you cheat me, you little rogue?" She made him no reply, but went on playing, very irregularly, however.

"Come! you *must* sing, Agnes!"

"I can't!" she murmured. "My heart is breaking! My—my—bro——" and fell fainting into the arms of her father. He rang instantly for assistance. In carrying her from the music-stool to the sofa, an open letter dropped from her bosom. Mr Dudleigh hastily picked it up, and saw that the direction was in the handwriting of his *son*, and bore the "Wapping" postmark. The stunning contents were as follows:—"My dear, dear, dear Agnes, farewell!—it may be *for ever!* I fly from my country! While you are reading this note, I am on my way to America. Do not call me cruel my sweet sister, for my heart is broken!—broken! Yesterday, near Oxford, I fought with a man who dared to insult me about our family troubles. I am afraid—God forgive me—that I have killed him! Agnes, Agnes, the bloodhounds are after me! Even were they not, I could not bear to look on my poor father, whom I have helped to ruin, under the encouragement of ONE who might have bred me better! I cannot stay in England, for I have lost my station in society; I owe thousands I can never repay; besides, Agnes, Agnes! the bloodhounds are after me! I scarcely know what I am saying! Break all this to my father—my wretched father—as gradually as you can. Do not let him know of it for a *fortnight*, at least. May God be your friend, my dear Agnes! Pray for me! pray for me, my darling Agnes!—yes, for me, your wretched, guilty, heart-broken brother!—H. D."

"Ah! he might have done worse—he *might* have done worse!" exclaimed the stupefied father. "Well, I must think about it!" and he calmly folded up the letter to put it into his pocket-book, when his daughter's eye caught sight of it, for she had recovered from her swoon while he was reading it; and with a faint shriek, and a frantic effort to snatch it from him, she fell back, and swooned again. Even all this did not rouse Mr Dudleigh. He sat still, gazing on his daughter with a vacant stare, and did not make the slightest effort to assist her recovery. I was summoned in to attend her, for she was so ill that they carried her up to bed.

Poor girl!—poor Agnes Dudleigh!—already had CONSUMPTION marked

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her for his own! The reader may possibly recollect that, in a previous part of this narrative, Miss Dudleigh was represented to be affianced to a young nobleman. I need hardly, I suppose, inform him that the "affair" was "all off," as soon as ever Lord —— heard of her fallen fortunes. To do him justice, he behaved in the business with perfect politeness and condescension; wrote to her from Italy, carefully returning her all her letters; spoke of her admirable qualities in the handsomest strain; and, in choice and feeling language, regretted the altered state of his affections, and that the "fates had ordained their separation." A few months afterwards, the estranged couple met casually in Hyde Park, and Lord —— passed Miss Dudleigh with a strange stare of irrecognition, that showed the advances he had made in the command of manner! She had been really attached to him, for he was a young man of handsome appearance, and elegant winning manners. The only things he wanted were a head and a heart. This circumstance, added to the perpetual harassment of domestic sorrows, had completely undermined her delicate constitution; and her brother's conduct prostrated the few remaining energies that were left her.

But Mrs Dudleigh has latterly slipped from our observation. I have little more to say about her. Aware that her own infamous conduct had conduced to her husband's ruin, she had resigned herself to the incessant lashings of remorse, and was wasting away daily. Her excesses had long before sapped her constitution, and she was now little else than a walking skeleton. She sat moping in her bedroom for hours together, taking little or no notice of what happened about her, and manifesting no interest in life. When, however, she heard of her son's fate—the only person on earth she really loved—the intelligence smote her finally down. She never recovered from the stroke. The only words she uttered, after hearing of his departure for America, were, "Wretched woman!—guilty mother!—I have done it all!" The serious illness of her poor daughter affected her scarcely at all. She would sit at her bedside, and pay her every attention in her power; but it was rather in the spirit and manner of a hired nurse than a mother.

To return, however, to the "chief mourner"—Mr Dudleigh. The attorney, whom he had sued for his villany in the mortgage transactions, contrived to get appointed solicitor to the commission of bankruptcy sued out against Mr Dudleigh; and he enhanced the bitterness and agony incident to the judicial proceedings he was employed to conduct, by the cruelty and insolence of his demeanour. He would not allow the slightest indulgence to the poor bankrupt, whom he was selling out of house and home, but remorselessly seized on every atom of goods and furniture the law allowed him, and put the heart-broken, helpless family to all the inconvenience his malice could suggest. His conduct was, throughout, mean, tyrannical—even diabolical, in its contemptuous disregard of the best feelings of human nature. Mr Dudleigh's energies were too much exhausted to admit of remonstrance or resistance. The only evidence he gave of smarting under the man's insolence was, after enduring an outrageous violation of his domestic privacy—a cruel interference with the few conveniences of his dying daughter and sick wife—when he suddenly touched the attorney's arm, and in a low, broken tone of voice, said—"Mr ——, I am a poor, heart-broken man, and have no one to avenge me, or you would not dare to do this;" and he turned away in tears. The house and furniture in —— Square, with every other item of property that was available, being disposed of, on winding up the affairs, it proved that the creditors could obtain a dividend of about fifteen shillings in the pound. So convinced were they of the unimpeached, the unimpeachable integrity of the poor bankrupt, that they not only spontaneously released him from all future claims, but entered into a subscription, amounting

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to £2000, which they put into his hands for the purpose of enabling him to recommence housekeeping on a small scale, and obtain some permanent means of livelihood. Under their advice, or rather direction—for he was passive as an infant—he removed to a small house in Chelsea, and commenced business as a coal merchant, or agent for the sale of coals, in a small and poor way, it may be supposed. His new house was very small, but neat, convenient, and situated in a quiet and creditable street. Yes, in a little one-storeyed house, with about eight square feet of garden frontage, resided the once wealthy and celebrated Mr Dudleigh!

The very first morning after Mrs Dudleigh had been removed to her new quarters, she was found dead in her bed; for the fatigues of changing her residence, added to the remorse and chagrin which had so long preyed upon her mind, had extinguished the last spark of her vital energies. When I saw her, which was not till the evening of the second day after her decease, she was lying in her coffin; and I shall not soon forget the train of instructive reflections elicited by the spectacle. Poor creature, her features looked indeed haggard and grief-worn! Mr Dudleigh wept over her remains like a child, and kissed the cold lips and hands with the liveliest transports of regret. At length came the day of the funeral, as plain and unpretending a one as could be. At the pressing solicitations of Mr Dudleigh, I attended her remains to the grave. It was an affecting thought, that the daughter was left dying in the house from which her mother was carried out to burial. Mr Dudleigh went through the whole of the melancholy ceremony with a calmness—and even cheerfulness — which surprised me. He did not betray any emotion when leaving the ground; except turning to look into the grave, and exclaiming rather faintly—"Well—here we leave you, poor wife!" On our return home, about three o'clock in the afternoon, he begged to be left alone for a few minutes, with pen, ink, and paper, as he had some important letters to write; and requested me to wait for him in Miss Dudleigh's room, where he would rejoin me, and accompany me part of my way up to town. I repaired, therefore, to Miss Dudleigh's chamber. She was sitting up, and dressed in mourning. The marble paleness of her even then beautiful features, was greatly enhanced by contrast with the deep black drapery she wore. She reminded me of the snow-drop she had an hour or two before laid on the pall of her mother's coffin! Her beauty was fast withering away under the blighting influence of sorrow and disease! She reclined in an easy-chair, her head leaning on her small snowy hand, the taper fingers of which were half concealed beneath her dark, clustering, uncurled tresses—

"Like a white rose, glistening 'mid evening gloom."

"How did he bear it?" she whispered, with a profound sigh, as soon as I had taken my place beside her. I told her that he had gone through the whole with more calmness and fortitude than could have been expected. "Ah!—'tis unnatural! He's grown strangely altered within these last few days, doctor! He never seems to *feel* anything! His troubles have stunned his heart, I'm afraid! Don't you think he *looks* altered?"

"Yes, my love, he is *thinner*, certainly."

"Ah—his hair is white!—He is old—he won't be long behind us!"

"I hope, that, now he is freed from the cares and distractions of business"——

"Doctor, is the grave deep enough for THREE?" inquired the poor girl abruptly, as if she had not heard me speaking. "Our family has been strangely desolated, doctor—has not it? My mother gone; the daughter on her deathbed; the father wretched, and ruined; the son—flown from his country—perhaps dead, or dying! But it has all been our own fault"——

"*You* have nothing to accuse yourself of, Miss Dudleigh," said I. She shook her head, and burst into tears. This was the melancholy vein of our

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conversation, when Mr Dudleigh made his appearance, in his black gloves and crape-covered hat, holding two letters in his hand.

"Come, doctor," said he, rather briskly, "you've a long walk before you! I'll accompany you part of the way, as I have some letters to put into the post."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself about that, Mr Dudleigh! *I'll* put them into the post, as I go by."

No, no—thank you—thank you," he interrupted me, with rather an embarrassed air, I thought; "I've several other little matters to do, and we had better be starting." I rose, and took my leave of Miss Dudleigh. Her father put his arms round her neck, and kissed her very fondly. "Keep up your spirits, Agnes!—and see and get into bed as soon as possible, for you are quite exhausted." He walked towards the door. "Oh, bless your little heart, my love!" said he, suddenly returning to her, and kissing her more fondly, if possible, than before. "We shall not be apart long, I dare say!"

We set off on our walk towards town; and Mr Dudleigh conversed with great calmness, speaking of his affairs even in an encouraging tone. At length we separated. "Remember me kindly to Mrs ——," said he, mentioning my wife's name, and shaking me warmly by the hand.

The next morning, as I sat at breakfast, making out my daily list, my wife, who had one of the morning papers in her hand, suddenly let it fall, and looking palely at me, exclaimed—"Oh, surely—surely, my dear, this can never be—Mr Dudleigh." I inquired what she meant, and she pointed out the following paragraph:—

"Attempted Suicide.—Yesterday evening, an elderly gentleman, dressed in deep mourning, was observed walking for some time near the waterside, a little above Chelsea-Reach, and presently stepped on board one of the barges, and threw himself from the outer one into the river. Most providentially this latter movement was seen by a boatman who was rowing past, and who succeeded, after some minutes, in seizing hold of the unfortunate person, and lifting him into the boat—but not till the vital spark seemed extinct. He was immediately carried to the public-house by the water-side, where prompt and judicious means were made use of—and with success. He is now lying at the —— public-house; but as there were no papers or cards about him, his name is at present unknown. The unfortunate gentleman is of middling stature—rather full made—of advanced years—his hair very grey, and he wears a mourning ring on his left hand."

I rang the bell, ordered a coach, drew on my boots, and put on my walking dress; and, in a little more than three or four minutes, was hurrying on my way to the house mentioned in the newspaper. A twopenny postman had the knocker in his hand at the moment of my opening the door, and put into my hand a paid letter, which I tore open as I drove along. Good God! it was from Mr Dudleigh; it afforded unequivocal evidence of the insanity which led him to attempt his life. It was written in a most extravagant and incongruous strain, and acquainted me with the writer's intention to "bid farewell to his troubles that evening." It ended with informing me, that I was left a legacy in his will for £5000—and hoping that, when his poor daughter died, "I would see her magnificently buried." By the time I had arrived at the house where he lay, I was almost fainting with agitation; and I was compelled to wait some minutes below, before I could sufficiently recover my self-possession. On entering the bedroom where he lay, I found him undressed, and fast asleep. There was no appearance whatever of discomposure in the features. His hands were clasped closely together; and in that position he had continued for several hours. The medical man who had been summoned in over-night, sat at his bedside, and informed me that his patient was going on as well as could be expected. The treatment he had adopted had been very judicious and

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successful; and I had no doubt that, when next Mr Dudleigh awoke, he would feel little, if any, the worse for what he had suffered. All my thoughts were now directed to Miss Dudleigh; for I felt sure that, if the intelligence had found its way to her, it must have destroyed her. I ran every inch of the distance between the two houses, and knocked gently at the door with my knuckles, that I might not disturb Miss Dudleigh. The servant-girl seeing my discomposed appearance, would have created a disturbance, by shrieking or making some other noise, had I not placed my fingers on her mouth, and, in a whisper, asked how her mistress was? "Master went home with you, sir, did not he?" she inquired, with an alarmed air.

"Yes—yes;" I replied hastily.

"Oh, I told Miss so! I told her so!" replied the girl, clasping her hands, and breathing freer.

"Oh, she has been uneasy about his not coming home last night—eh?—Ah—I thought so this morning, and that is what has brought me here in such a hurry," said I, as calmly as I could. After waiting down stairs to recover my breath a little, I repaired to Miss Dudleigh's room. She was awake. The moment I entered she started up in bed—her eyes straining, and her arms stretched towards me.

"My—my—father!"——she gasped; and before I could open my lips, or even reach her side, she had fallen back in bed, and, as I thought, expired. She had swooned; and, during the whole course of my experience, I never saw a swoon so long and closely resemble death. For more than an hour, the nurse, servant-girl, and I, hung over her in agonising and breathless suspense, striving to detect her breath—which made no impression whatever on the glass I from time to time held over her mouth. Her pulse fluttered and fluttered—feeb[illegible]r and feebler—till I could not perceive that it beat at all. "Well!" thought I, at last removing my fingers, "you are gone, sweet Agnes Dudleigh, from a world that has but few as fair and good!"—when a slight undulation of the breast, accompanied by a faint sigh, indicated slowly returning consciousness. Her breath came again, short and faint; but she did not open her eyes for some time after. * *

"Well, my sweet girl," said I, presently observing her eyes fixed steadfastly on me; "why all this? What has happened? What is the matter with you?" and I clasped her cold fingers in my hand. By placing my ear so close to her lips that it touched them, I distinguished the sound—"My fa—father!"

"Well! and what of your father? He is just as usual, and sends his love to you." Her eyes, as it were, dilated on me; her breath came quicker and stronger, and her frame vibrated with emotion. "He is coming home shortly, by—by—*four* o'clock this afternoon—yes, four o'clock at the latest. Thinking that a change of scene might revive his spirits, I prevailed on him last night to walk on with me home—and—and he slept at my house." She did not attempt to speak, but her eye continued fixed on me with an unwavering look that searched my very soul! "My wife and Mr Dudleigh will drive down together," I continued firmly, though my heart sank within me at the thought of the improbability of such being the case; "and I shall return here by the time they arrive, and meet them. Come, come, Miss Dudleigh—this is weak—absurd!" said I, observing that what I said seemed to make no impression on her. I ordered some port-wine and water to be brought, and forced a few tea-spoonfuls into her mouth. They revived her, and I gave her more. In a word, she rapidly recovered from the state of uttermost exhaustion into which she had fallen; and, before I left, she said solemnly to me, "Doctor ——! if—if you have deceived me!—if anything dreadful has really—really"——

I left, half distracted to think of the impossibility of fulfilling the promise I had made her, as well as of accounting satisfactorily for not doing so. What could I do? I drove rapidly homewards, and requested my wife to hurry down immediately to Miss Dudleigh,

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and pacify her with saying that her father was riding round with me, for the sake of exercise, and that we should come to her together. I then hurried through my few professional calls, and repaired to Mr Dudleigh. To my unutterable joy and astonishment, I found him up dressed—for his clothes had been drying all night—and sitting quietly by the fire, in company with the medical man. His appearance exhibited no traces whatever of the accident which had befallen him. But, alas! on looking close at him—on examining his features—Oh, that eye! that smile! they told me of departed reason! I was gazing on an *idiot!* O God! What was to become of Miss Dudleigh? How was I to bring father and daughter face to face? My knees smote together, while I sat beside him! But it *must* be done, or Miss Dudleigh's life would be the forfeit! The only project I could hit upon for disguising the frightful state of the case, was to hint to Miss Dudleigh, if she perceived anything wild or unusual in his demeanour, that he was a little flustered with wine! But *what* a circumstance to communicate to the dying girl. And, even if it succeeded, what would ensue on the next morning. Would it be *safe* to leave him with her? I was perplexed and confounded between all these painful conjectures and difficulties!

He put on his hat and greatcoat, and we got into my chariot together. He was perfectly quiet and gentle, conversed on indifferent subjects, and spoke of having had "a cold bath" last night, which had done him much good! My heart grew heavier and heavier as we neared the home where I was to bring her idiot father to Miss Dudleigh! I felt sick with agitation, as we descended the carriage steps.

But I was for some time happily disappointed. He entered her room with eagerness, ran up to her and kissed her with his usual affectionate energy. She held him in her arms for some time, exclaiming—"Oh, father, father! How glad I am to see you! I thought some accident had happened to you! Why did you not tell me that you were going home with Dr ——?" My wife and I trembled, and looked at each other despairingly.

"Why," replied her father, sitting down beside her, "you see, my love, Dr —— recommended me a cold bath."

"A *cold bath* at THIS time of the year!" exclaimed Miss Dudleigh, looking at me with astonishment. I smiled with ill-assumed nonchalance.

"It is very advantageous at—at—even this season of the year," I stammered, for I observed Miss Dudleigh's eye fixed on me like a ray of lightning.

"Yes; but they ought to have *taken off my clothes first*," said Mr Dudleigh, with a shuddering motion. His daughter suddenly laid her hand on him, uttered a faint shriek, and fell back in her bed in a swoon. The dreadful scene of the morning was all acted over again. I think I should have rejoiced to see her expire on the spot; but no! Providence had allotted her a further space, that she might drain the cup of sorrow to the dregs!

* * * *

*Tuesday*, 18*th July* 18—.—I am still in attendance on poor unfortunate Miss Dudleigh. The scenes I have to encounter are often anguishing, and even heart-breaking. She lingers on, day after day, and week after week, in increasing pain! By the bedside of the dying girl sits the figure of an elderly grey-haired man, dressed in neat and simple mourning—now gazing into vacancy with "lack-lustre eye"—and then suddenly kissing her hand with childish eagerness, and chattering mere gibberish to her! It is her idiot father! Yes, he proves an irrecoverable idiot—but is uniformly quiet and inoffensive. We at first intended to have sent him to a neighbouring private institution for the reception of the insane; but poor Miss Dudleigh would not hear of it, and threatened to destroy herself if her father was removed. She insisted on his being allowed to continue with her, and consented that a proper person should be in constant attendance on him. She herself could manage him, she said; and so it proved. He is a mere child in her hands. If ever

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he is inclined to be mischievous or obstreperous—which is very seldom—if she do but say, "hush!" or lift up her trembling finger, or fix her eye upon him reprovingly, he is instantly cowed, and runs up to her to "kiss and be friends." He often falls down on his knees, when he thinks he has offended her, and cries like a child. She will not trust him out of her sight for more than a few moments together, except when he retires with his guardian, to rest: and, indeed, he shows as little inclination to leave her. The nurse's situation is almost a sort of sinecure; for the anxious officiousness of Mr Dudleigh leaves her little to do. He alone gives his daughter her medicine and food, and does so with exquisite gentleness and tenderness. He has no notion of her real state, that she is dying; and, finding that she could not succeed in her efforts gradually to apprise him of the event, which he always turned off with a smile of incredulity, she gives in to his humour, and tells him—poor girl!—that she is getting better! He has taken it into his head that she is to be married to Lord —— as soon as she recovers, and talks with high glee of the magnificent repairs going on at his former house in —— Square! He always accompanies me to the door; and sometimes writes me cheques for £50, which, of course, is a delusion only, as he has no banker, and few funds to put in his hands; and, at other times, slips a shilling or a sixpence into my hand at leaving, thinking, doubtless, that he has given me a guinea!

*Friday.*—The idea of Miss Dudleigh's rapidly approaching marriage continues still uppermost in her father's head; and he is incessantly pestering her to make preparations for the event. To-day he appealed to me, and complained that she would not order her wedding-dress.

"Father, dear father!" said Miss Dudleigh faintly, laying her wasted hand on his arm, "only be quiet a little, and I'll begin to make it! I'll really set about it to-morrow!" He kissed her fondly, and then eagerly emptied his pockets of all the loose silver that was in them, telling her to take it, and order the materials. I saw that there was something or other peculiar in the expression of Miss Dudleigh's eye, in saying what she did, as if some sudden scheme had suggested itself to her. Indeed, the looks with which she constantly regards him, are such as I can find no adequate terms of description for. They bespeak blended anguish, apprehension, pity, love; in short, an expression that haunts me wherever I go. Oh, what a scene of suffering humanity!—a daughter's deathbed, watched by an idiot father!

*Monday.*—I now know what was Miss Dudleigh's meaning, in assenting to her father's proposal last Friday. I found, this morning, the poor dear girl engaged on her shroud! It is of fine muslin, and she is attempting to sew and embroider it. The people about her did all they could to dissuade her: but there was at last no resisting her importunities. Yes! there she sits, poor thing, propped up by pillows, making frequent but feeble efforts to draw her needle through her gloomy work—her father, the while, holding one end of the muslin, and watching her work with childish eagerness! Sometimes a tear will fall from her eyes while thus engaged. It did this morning. Mr Dudleigh observed it, and turning to me, said, with an arch smile, "Ah, ha! how is it that young ladies always cry about being married?" Oh, the look Miss Dudleigh gave me, as she suddenly dropped her work and turned her head aside!

*Saturday.*—Mr Dudleigh is hard at work making his daughter a cowslip wreath, out of some flowers given him by his keeper.

When I took my leave to-day, he accompanied me, as usual, down stairs, and led the way into the little parlour. He then shut the door, and told me in a low whisper, that he wished me to bring him an *honest* lawyer to make his will; for that he was going to settle £200,000 upon his daughter!—of course I put him off with promises to look out for what he asked. It is rather remarkable, I think, that he has never once,

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in my hearing, made any allusion to his deceased wife. As I shook his hand at parting, he stared suddenly at me, and said, "Doctor, doctor! my daughter is VERY slow in getting well —isn't she?"

*Monday, July* 23.—The suffering angel will soon leave us and all her sorrows! She is dying fast. She is very much altered in appearance, and has not power enough to speak in more than a whisper, and that but seldom. Her father sits gazing at her with a puzzled air, as if he did not know what to make of her unusual silence. He was a good deal vexed when she laid aside her wedding-dress; and tried to tempt her to resume it, by showing her a shilling! While I was sitting beside her, Miss Dudleigh, without opening her eyes, exclaimed, scarcely audible, "Oh! be kind to him! be kind to him! He won't be long here! He is very gentle!"

*Monday evening.*—Happening to be summoned to the neighbourhood, I called a second time during the day on Miss Dudleigh. All was quiet when I entered the room. The nurse was sitting at the window, reading; and Mr Dudleigh occupied his usual place at the bedside, leaning over his daughter, whose arms were clasped together round his neck.

"Hush! hush!" said Mr Dudleigh, in a low whisper, as I approached—"Don't make a noise—she's asleep!" Yes, she was ASLEEP—and to wake no more! Her snow-cold arms—her features—which, on parting the dishevelled hair that hid them, I perceived to be fallen—told me that she was dead!

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She was buried in the same grave as her mother. Her wretched father, contrary to our apprehensions, made no disturbance whatever while she lay dead. They told him that she was no more—but he did not seem to comprehend what was meant. He would take hold of her passive hand, gently shake it, and let it fall again, with a melancholy wandering stare, that was pitiable! He sat at her coffin-side all day long, and laid fresh flowers upon her every morning. Dreading lest some sudden paroxysm might occur, if he was suffered to see the lid screwed down, and her remains removed, we gave him a tolerably strong opiate in some wine, on the morning of the funeral; and, as soon as he was fast asleep, we proceeded with the last sad rites, and committed to the cold and quiet grave another broken heart.

Mr Dudleigh suffered himself to be soon after conveyed to a private asylum, where he had every comfort and attention requisite for his circumstances. He had fallen into profound melancholy, and seldom or never spoke to any one. He would shake me by the hand languidly, when I called to see him, but hung down his head in silence, without answering any of my questions.

His favourite seat was a rustic bench beneath an ample sycamore tree, in the green behind the house. Here he would sit, for hours together, gazing fixedly in one direction, towards a rustic church-steeple, and uttering deep sighs. No one interfered with him; and he took no notice of any one. One afternoon a gentleman of foreign appearance called at the asylum, and in a hurried, faltering voice, asked if he could see Mr Dudleigh. A servant but newly engaged on the establishment, imprudently answered—"Certainly, sir. Yonder he is, sitting under the sycamore. He never notices any one, sir." The stranger—young Dudleigh, who had but that morning arrived from America—rushed past the servant into the garden; and, flinging down his hat, fell on one knee before his father, clasping his hands over his breast. Finding his father did not seem inclined to notice him, he gently touched him on the knee, and whispered—"FATHER!" Mr Dudleigh started at the sound—turned suddenly towards his son—looked him full in the face—fell back in his seat—and instantly expired.

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# CHAPTER XXIII.

## MOTHER AND SON.

This may be considered the most mournful extract from my Diary. It appears to me a touching and terrible disclosure of the misery, disgrace, and ruin consequent on Gambling. Not that I imagine it possible, even by the most moving exhibition, to soften the more than nether millstone hardness of a gamester's heart, or enable a *voluntary* victim to break from the meshes in which he has suffered himself to be entangled; but the lamentable cries ascending from this pit of horror, may scare off those who are thoughtlessly *approaching* its brink. The moral of the following events may be gathered up into a word or two:—Oh! be wise—and *be wise in time!*

I took more than ordinary pains to acquaint myself with the transactions which are hereafter specified; and some of the means I adopted are occasionally mentioned, as I go on with the narrative. It may be as well to state, that the events detailed are assigned a date which barely comes within the present century. I have reason, nevertheless, to know, that at least one of the guilty agents still survives to pollute the earth with his presence; and if that individual should presume to gainsay any portion of the following narrative, his impotent efforts will meet with the disdain they merit!

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Mr Beauchamp came to the full receipt of a fortune of two or three thousand a-year, which, though hereditary, was at his absolute disposal about the period of his return from those Continental peregrinations which are judged essential to complete an English gentleman's education. External circumstances seemed to combine in his favour. Happiness and honour in life were insured him at the cost of very moderate exertions on his own part—and *those* requisite, not to originate, or continue his course—but only to *guide* it. No one was better apprised than himself of the precise position he occupied in life; yet the apparent immunity from the cares and anxieties of life, which seemed irrevocably secured to him, instead of producing its natural effect on a well-ordered mind, of stimulating it to honourable action, led to widely different, most melancholy, but by no means unusual results—a prostitution of his energies and opportunities to the service of fashionable dissipation. The restraints to which, during a long minority, he had been subjected by his admirable mother, who nursed his fortune as sedulously, but *more* successfully, than she cultivated his mind and morals—served, alas! little other purpose than to whet his appetite for the pleasurable pursuits to which he considered himself entitled, and from which he had been so long and unnecessarily debarred. All these forbidden fruits clustered before him in tempting, but unhallowed splendour, the instant that Oxford threw open its portals to receive him. He found there many spirits as ardent and dissatisfied with past restraints as himself. The principal features of his character were flexibility and credulity; and his leading propensity — one that, like the wrath of Achilles, drew after it innumerable sorrows—the love of *play*.

The first false step he made was an unfortunate selection of a tutor; a man of agreeable and compliant man-

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ners, but utterly worthless in point of moral character; one who had impoverished himself, when first at college, by gaming, but who, having learned "*wisdom*," was now a subtle and cautious gamester. He was one of a set of notorious *pluckers*, among whom, shameful to relate, were found several young men of rank; and whose business it was to seek out freshmen for their dupes. Eccles—the name I shall give the tutor—was an able mathematician; and that was the only thing that Beauchamp looked to in selecting him. Beauchamp got regularly introduced to the set to which his tutor belonged; but his mother's lively and incessant surveillance put it out of his power to embarrass himself by serious losses. He was long enough, however, apprenticed to guilt, to form the habits and disposition of a *gamester*. The cunning Eccles, when anxiously interrogated by Mrs Beauchamp about her son's general conduct, gave his pupil a flourishing character, both for moral excellence and literary attainments, and acquitted him of any tendency to the vices usually prevalent at college. And all this, when Eccles knew that he had seen, but a few weeks before, among his pupil's papers, copies of long bills, accepted payable on his reaching twenty-one—to the tune of £1500; and further, that he, the tutor himself, was the holder of one of these acceptances; which insured him £500 for the £300 he had *kindly* furnished for his pupil! His demure and plausible air quite took with the unsuspicious Mrs Beauchamp; and she thought it impossible that her son could find a fitter companion to the Continent!

On young Beauchamp's return to England, the first thing he did was to despatch his obsequious tutor into the country, to trumpet his pupil's praises to his mother, and apprize her of his coming. The good old lady was in ecstasies at the glowing colours in which her son's virtues were painted by Eccles—such uniform moderation and prudence, amidst the seductive scenes of the Continent—such shining candour—such noble liberality!—In the fulness of her heart, Mrs Beauchamp promised the tutor, who was educated for the *Church*, the next presentation to a living which was expected very shortly to fall vacant—as some "small return for the *invaluable* services he had rendered her son!"

It was a memorable day when young Beauchamp arrived at the Hall in —— shire, stood suddenly before his transported mother, in all the pride of person, and of apparent accomplishments. He was indeed a fine young fellow to look at. His well-cast features beamed with an expression of frankness and generosity; and his manners were exquisitely tempered with cordiality and elegance. He had *brushed the bloom* off Continental flowers in passing, and caught their glow and perfume.

It was several minutes before he could disengage himself from the embraces of his mother, who laughed and wept by turns, and uttered the most passionate exclamations of joy and affection. "Oh, that your poor old father could see you!" she sobbed, and almost cried herself into hysterics. Young Beauchamp was deeply moved with this display of parental tenderness. He saw and felt that his mother's whole soul was bound up with his own; and with the rapid resolutions of youth, he had, in five minutes, changed the whole course and scope of his life—renounced the pleasures of London, and resolved to come and settle on his estates in the country, live under the proud and fond eye of his mother, and, in a word, tread in the steps of his father. He felt suddenly imbued with the spirit of the good old English country gentleman, and resolved to live the life of one. There was, however, a cause in operation, and powerful operation, to bring about this change of feeling, to which I have not yet adverted. His cousin, Ellen Beauchamp, *happened* to be thought of by her aunt as a fit person to be staying with her when her son arrived. Yes—the little blue-eyed girl with whom he had romped fifteen years ago, now sat beside him in the bloom of budding womanhood—her peachy cheeks alternately pale and flushed, as she saw her cousin's

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inquiring eye settled upon her, and scanning her beautiful proportions. Mr Beauchamp took the very first opportunity he could seize of asking his mother, with some trepidation, "whether Ellen was *engaged*."

"I think she is *not*," replied his delighted mother, bursting into tears, and folding him in her arms—"but I wish *somebody* would take the earliest opportunity of doing so."

"Ah, ha!—Then she's Mrs Beauchamp, junior!" replied her son with enthusiasm.

Matters were quickly, quietly, and effectually arranged to bring about that desirable end—as they always are, when all parties understand one another; and young Beauchamp made up his mind to appear in a new character—that of a quiet country gentleman, the friend and patron of an attached tenantry, and a promising aspirant after county honours. What is there in life like the sweet and freshening feelings of the wealthy young squire, stepping into the sphere of his hereditary honours and influence, and becoming at once the revered master of household and tenantry, grown grey in his father's service, the prop of his family, and the "rising man" in the county! Young Beauchamp experienced these salutary and reviving feelings in their full force. They diverted the current of his ambition into a new course, and enabled him keenly to appreciate his own capabilities. The difference between the life he had just determined on, and that he had formerly projected, was simply, so to speak, the difference between being a Triton among minnows, and a minnow among Tritons. At home, residing on his own property, surrounded by his own dependents, and by neighbours who were solicitous to secure his good graces, he could *feel* and enjoy his own consequence. Thus, in every point of view, a country life appeared preferable to one in the "gay and whirlpool crowded town."

There was, however, one individual at —— Hall, who viewed these altered feelings and projects with no satisfaction—it was Mr Eccles. This mean and selfish individual saw at once, that, in the event of these alterations being carried into effect, his own nefarious services would be instantly dispensed with, and a state of feelings brought into play which would lead his pupil to look with disgust at the scenes to which he had been introduced at college, and on the Continent. He immediately set to work to frustrate the plans of his pupil. He selected the occasion of his being sent for one morning by Mr. Beauchamp into his library, to commence operations. He was not discouraged, when his *ci-devant* pupil, whose eyes had really, as Eccles suspected, been opened to the iniquity of his tutor's doings, commenced thanking him, in a cold and formal style, for his past services, and requested presentation of the bill he held against him for £500, which he instantly paid. He then proceeded, without interruption from the mortified Eccles, to state his regret at being unable to reward his services with a living at present; but that, if ever it were in his power, he might rely on it, &c. &c. Mr Eccles, with astonishment, mentioned the living of which Mrs Beauchamp had promised him the reversion; but received an evasive reply from Mr Beauchamp, who was at length so much irritated at the pertinacity, and even the reproachful tone with which his tutor pressed his claim, that he said sharply, "Mr Eccles, when my mother made you that promise, she never consulted me, in whose sole gift the living is. And besides, sir, what did she know of our tricks at French hazard and rouge et noir? She must have thought your skill at play an odd recommendation for the duties of the church." High words, mutual recriminations, and threats ensued, and they parted in anger. The tutor resolved to make his "ungrateful" pupil repent of his misconduct; and he lacked neither the tact nor the opportunities necessary for accomplishing his purpose. The altered demeanour of Mrs Beauchamp, together with the haughty and constrained civility of her son, soon warned Mr Eccles that his de-

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parture from the Hall should not be delayed; and he very shortly withdrew.

Mr Beauchamp began to breathe freely, as it were, when the evil spirit, in his tutor's shape, was no longer at his elbow, poisoning his principles, and prompting him to vice and debauchery. He resolved, forthwith, to *be* all that his tutor had *represented* him to his mother, and to atone for past indiscretions by a life of sobriety and virtue. All now went on smoothly and happily at the Hall. The new squire entered actively on the duties devolving upon him, and was engaged daily driving his beautiful cousin over his estate, and showing to his obsequious tenantry their future lady. On what trifling accidents do often the great changes of life depend! Mr Beauchamp, after a three months' continuance in the country, was sent for by his solicitor to town, in order to complete the final arrangements of his estate, and which, he supposed, would occupy him but a few days. That London visit led to his ruin! It may be recollected that the execrable Eccles owed his pupil a grudge for the disappointment he had occasioned him, and the time and manner of his dismissal. What does the reader imagine was the diabolical device he adopted to bring about the utter ruin of his unsuspicious pupil? Apprised of Mr Beauchamp's visit to London (Mr Eccles had removed to lodgings but a little distance from the Hall, and was, of course, acquainted with the leading movements of the family), he wrote the following letter to a baronet in London, with whom he had been very intimate as a "plucker" at Oxford, and who having ruined himself by his devotion to play, equally in respect of fortune and character, was now become little else than a downright systematic sharper:—

"Dear Sir Edward,

"Young Beauchamp, one of our quondam *pigeons* at Oxford, who has just come of age, will be in London next Friday or Saturday, and put up at his old hotel, the ——. *He will bear plucking.* Verb. suf. The bird is somewhat shy, but you are a good shot. Don't frighten him. He is giving up *life*, and going to turn *saint!* The fellow has used me cursedly ill; he has cut me quite, and refused me old Dr ——'s living. I'll make him repent it!—I will, by ——!

"Yours ever, most faithfully,
"Peter Eccles.

"To Sir Edward Streighton.

"P.S.—If Beauchamp plucks well, you won't press me for the trifle I owe —will you? Burn this note."

This infernal letter, which, by a singular concurrence of events, got into the hands where *I saw it*, laid the train for such a series of plotting and manœuvring, as in the end ruined poor Beauchamp, and gave Eccles his coveted revenge.

When Beauchamp quitted the Hall, his mother and Ellen had the most solemn assurances that his stay in town would not be protracted beyond the week. Nothing but this could quiet the good old lady's apprehensions, who expressed an unaccountable conviction that some calamity or other was about to assail their house. She had had a dreadful dream, she said!—but when importuned to tell it, answered, that if Henry came safe home, then she would tell them her dream. In short, his departure was a scene of tears and gloom, which left an impression of sadness on his own mind, that lasted all the way up to town. On his arrival, he betook himself to his old place, the —— Hotel, near Piccadilly; and, in order to expedite his business as much as possible, appointed the evening of the very day of his arrival for a meeting with his solicitor.

The morning papers duly apprised the world of the important fact, that "Henry Beauchamp, Esquire, had arrived at ——'s, from his seat in ——shire;" and scarcely ten minutes after he had read the officious annunciation at breakfast, his valet brought in the card of Sir Edward Streighton.

"Sir Edward Streighton!" exclaimed Beauchamp with astonish-

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ment, laying down the card; adding, after a pause, with a cold and doubtful air, "Show in Sir Edward, of course."

In a few moments the baronet was ushered into the room—made up to his old "friend" with great cordiality, and expressed a thousand winning civilities. He was attired in a style of fashionable negligence; and his pale, emaciated features insured him, at least, the *show* of a welcome, with which he would not otherwise have been greeted; for Beauchamp, though totally ignorant of the present pursuits and degraded character of his visitor, had seen enough of him in the heyday of dissipation to avoid a renewal of their intimacy. Beauchamp was touched with the air of languor and exhaustion assumed by Sir Edward, and asked kindly after his health.

The wily baronet contrived to keep him occupied with that topic for nearly an hour, till he fancied he had established an interest for himself in his destined victim's heart. He told him, with a languid smile, that the moment he saw Beauchamp's arrival in the papers, he had hurried, ill as he was, to pay a visit to his "old chum," and "talk over old times." In short, after laying out all his powers of conversation, he so interested and delighted his quondam associate, that he extorted a reluctant promise from Beauchamp to dine with him the next evening, on the plausible pretext of his being in too delicate health to venture out himself at night-time. Sir Edward departed, apparently in a low mood, but really exulting in the success with which he considered he had opened his infernal campaign. He hurried to the house of one of his comrades in guilt, whom he invited to dinner on the morrow. Now, the fiendish object of this man, Sir Edward Streighton, in asking Beauchamp to dinner, was to revive in his bosom the half-extinguished embers of his love for play! There are documents now in existence to show that Sir Edward and his companions had made the most exact calculations of poor Beauchamp's property, and even arranged the proportions in which the expected spoils were to be shared among the complotters! The whole conduct of the affair was intrusted, at his own instance, to Sir Edward; who, with a smile, declared that he "knew all the crooks and crannies of young Beauchamp's heart;" and that he had already settled his scheme of operations. He was himself to keep for some time in the background, and on no occasion to come forward till he was *sure* of his prey.

At the appointed hour, Beauchamp, though not without having experienced some misgivings in the course of the day, found himself seated at the elegant and luxurious table of Sir Edward, in company with two of the baronet's "choicest spirits." It would be superfluous to pause over the exquisite wines and luscious cookery which were placed in requisition for the occasion, or the various and brilliant conversation that flashed around the table. Sir Edward was a man of talent and observation; and, foul as were the scenes in which he had latterly passed his life, was full of rapid and brilliant repartee, and piquant sketches of men and manners without end. Like the poor animal whose palate is for a moment tickled with the bait alluring it to destruction, Beauchamp was in ecstasies! There was, besides, such a flattering deference paid to everything that fell from his lips—so much eager curiosity excited by the accounts he gave of one or two of his foreign adventures—such an interest taken in the arrangements he contemplated for augmenting his estates in ——shire, &c. &c., that Beauchamp never felt better pleased with himself, nor with his companions. About eleven o'clock, one of Sir Edward's friends proposed a rubber at whist, "thinking they had all of them talked one another hoarse," but Sir Edward promptly negatived it. The proposer insisted, but Sir Edward coldly repeated his refusal. "*I* am not tired of my friends' conversation, though they may be of mine! And I fancy, Beauchamp," he continued, shaking his head with a serious air, "you and I

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have burnt our fingers too often at college, to be desirous of renewing our pranks."

"Why, good God, Sir Edward!" rejoined the proposer, "what do you mean? Are you insinuating that I am fond of *deep play?—I*, I that have been such a sufferer?" How was it that such shallow trickery could not be seen through by a man who knew anything of the world? The answer is obvious —The victim's penetration had deserted him. Flattery and wine—what will they not lead a man to? In short, the farce was so well kept up that Beauchamp, fancying he alone stood in the way of the evening's amusements, felt himself called upon to "beg they would not consult *him*, if they were disposed for a rubber, as he would make a hand with the greatest pleasure imaginable." The proposer and his friend looked appealingly to Sir Edward.

"Oh! God forbid that I should hinder you, since you're all so disposed," said the baronet, with a polite air; and, in a few minutes, the four *friends* were seated at the whist table. *Sir Edward was obliged to send out, and buy, or borrow cards!* "He really so seldom," &c., "especially in his poor health," &c.! There was nothing whatever, in the conduct of the game, calculated to arouse a spark of suspicion. The three confederates acted their parts to admiration, and maintained throughout the matter-of-fact, listless air, of men who have sat down to cards, each out of complaisance to the others. At the end of the second rubber, which was a long one, they paused awhile, rose, and betook themselves to refreshments.

"By the way, Apsley," said Sir Edward suddenly, "have you heard how that extraordinary affair of General ——'s terminated?"

"Decided against him," was the reply; "but I think wrongly. At ——'s," naming a celebrated coterie, "where the affair was ultimately canvassed, they were equally divided in opinion; and, on the strength of it, the General swears he won't pay."

"It is certainly one of the most singular things in the world!"

"Pray, what might the disputed point be?" inquired Beauchamp, sipping a glass of liqueur.

"Oh, merely a bit of town tittle-tattle!" replied Sir Edward carelessly, "about a Rouge et Noir bet between Lord —— and General ——: I daresay, you would feel no interest in it whatever."

But Beauchamp *did* feel interested enough to press his host for an account of the matter; and he presently found himself listening to a story told most graphically by Sir Edward, and artfully calculated to interest and inflame the passions of his hearer. Beauchamp drank in eagerly every word. He could not help identifying himself with the parties spoken of. A Satanic smile flickered occasionally over the countenances of the conspirators, as they beheld these unequivocal indications that their prey was entering their toils. Sir Edward represented the hinge of the story to be a moot point at Rouge et Noir; and when he had concluded, an animated discussion arose. Beauchamp took an active part in the dispute, siding with Mr Apsley. Sir Edward got *flustered!* and began to express himself rather heatedly. Beauchamp also felt himself kindling, and involuntarily cooled his ardour with glass after glass of the wine that stood before him. At length, out leaped a bold bet from Beauchamp, that he would make the same point with General ——. Sir Edward shrugged his shoulders, and, with a smile, "declined winning his money," on a point clear as the noonday sun! Mr Hillier, however, who was of Sir Edward's opinion, instantly took Beauchamp; and, for the symmetry of the thing, Apsley and Sir Edward, in spite of the latter's protestation to Beauchamp, betted highly on their respective opinions. Somebody suggested an adjournment to the "establishment" at —— Street, where they might decide the question; and thither, accordingly, after great show of reluctance on the part of Sir Edward, they all four repaired.

The reader need not fear that I am going to dilate upon the sickening



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horrors of a modern "hell!"—for into such a place did Beauchamp find himself introduced. The infernal splendour of the scene by which he was surrounded smote his soul with a sense of guilty awe the moment he entered, flushed though he was, and unsteady with wine. A spectral recollection of his mother and Ellen, wreathed with the haloes of virtue and purity, glanced across his mind; and, for a moment, he thought himself really in hell! Sick and faint, he sat down for a few seconds at an unoccupied table. He felt half determined to rush out from the room. His kind friends perceived his agitation. Sir Edward asked him if he were ill? But Beauchamp, with a sickly smile, referred his sensations to a heated room, and the unusual quantity of wine he had drunk. Half ashamed of himself, and dreading their banter, he presently rose from his seat, and declared himself recovered. After standing some time beside the Rouge et Noir table, where tremendous stakes were playing for, amidst profound and agitating silence—where he marked the sallow features of General —— and Lord ——, the parties implicated in the affair mentioned at Sir Edward's table, and who, having arranged their dispute, were now over head and ears in a *new* transaction—the four friends withdrew to one of the private tables to talk over their bet. Alas! half-an-hour's time beheld them all at *hazard!*—Beauchamp playing! and with excitement and enthusiasm equalling any one's in the room. Sir Edward maintained the negligent and reluctant air of a man overpersuaded into acquiescence in the wishes of his companions. Every time that Beauchamp shook the fatal dice-box, the pale face of his mother looked at him; yet still he shook, and still he threw—for he won freely from Apsley and Hillier. About four o'clock he took his departure, with bank-notes in his pocket-book to the amount of £95, as his evening's winning.

He walked home to his hotel, weary and depressed in spirits, ashamed and enraged at his own weak compliances and irresolution. The thought suddenly struck him, however, that he would make amends for his misconduct, by appropriating the whole of his unhallowed gains to the purchase of jewellery for his mother and cousin. Relieved by this consideration, he threw himself on his bed, and slept, though uneasily, till a late hour in the morning. His first thought on waking was the last that had occupied his mind over-night; but it was in a moment met by another, and more startling reflection—What would Sir Edward, Hillier, and Apsley think of him, dragging them to play, and winning their money, without giving them an opportunity of retrieving their losses! The more he thought of it, the more was he embarrassed; and as he tossed about on his bed, the suspicion flashed across his disturbed mind that he was embroiled with gamblers. With what credit could he skulk from the attack he had himself provoked? Perplexed and agitated with the dilemma he had drawn upon himself, he came to the conclusion, that, at all events, he must invite the baronet and his friends to dinner that day, and give them their revenge, when he might retreat with honour and for ever. Every one who reads these pages will anticipate the event.

Gaming is a magical stream; if you do but wade far enough into it to wet the soles of your feet, there is an influence in the waters, which draws you irresistibly in, deeper and deeper, till you are sucked into the roaring vortex and perish. If it were not unduly paradoxical, one might say, with respect to gaming, that he has come to the end who has made a beginning!

Mr Beauchamp postponed the business which he had himself fixed for transaction that evening, and received Sir Edward—who had found out that he could *now* venture from home at nights—and his two friends, with all appearance of cheerfulness and cordiality. In his heart he felt ill at ease; but his uneasiness vanished with every glass of wine he drank. His guests were all men of conversation; and they took care to select the most interesting topics. Beauchamp was delighted. Some slight laughing allu-

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sions were made by Hillier and Apsley to their over-night's adventure; but Sir Edward coldly characterised it as an "absurd affair," and told them they deserved to suffer as they did. This was exactly the signal for which Beauchamp had long been waiting; and he proposed, in a moment, that cards and dice should be brought in to finish the evening with. Hillier and Apsley hesitated; Sir Edward looked at his watch, and talked of the opera. Beauchamp, however, was peremptory, and down they all sat—and to *Hazard!* Beauchamp was fixedly determined to lose, that evening, a hundred pounds, inclusive of his over-night's winnings; and veiled his purpose so flimsily that his opponents saw, in a moment, "what he was after." Mr Apsley laid down the dice-box with a haughty air, and said, "Mr Beauchamp, I do not understand you, sir. You are playing neither with boys nor swindlers; and be pleased, besides, to recollect at whose instance we sat down to this evening's Hazard."

Mr Beauchamp laughed it off, and protested he did his best. Apsley, apparently satisfied, resumed his play, and their victim *felt* himself in their meshes—that the "snare of the fowler was upon him." They played with various success for about two hours; and Sir Edward was listlessly intimating his intention to have a throw for the first time, "for company's sake," when a card of a young nobleman, one of the most profligate of the profligate set whom Beauchamp had known at Oxford, was brought in.

"Ah! Lord ——!" exclaimed Sir Edward, with joyful surprise—"An age since I saw him! How very strange—how fortunate that I should happen to be here!—Oh, come, Beauchamp"—seeing his host disposed to utter a frigid "not at home"—"come, *must* ask him in! The very best fellow in life!" Now, Lord —— and Sir Edward were bosom friends, equally unprincipled, and that very morning had they arranged this most *unexpected* visit of his lordship! As soon as the ably-sustained excitement and enthusiasm of his lordship had subsided, he, of course, assured them that he should leave immediately, unless they proceeded with their play, and he stationed himself as an onlooker beside Beauchamp.

The infernal crew now began to see they had it "all their own way." Their tactics might have been finally frustrated, had Beauchamp but possessed sufficient moral courage to yield to the loud promptings of his better judgment, and firmly determined to stop in time. Alas! however, he had taken into his bosom the torpid snake, and kept it there till it revived. In the warmth of excitement he forgot his fears, and his decaying propensities to play were rapidly resuscitated. Before the evening's close, he had entered into the spirit of the game with as keen a relish as a professed gamester! With a sort of frenzy, he proposed bets, which the *cautious* baronet and his coadjutors hesitated, and, at last, refused to take! About three o'clock they separated, and, on making up accounts, they found that, so equally had profit and loss been shared, that no one had lost or gained more than £20. Beauchamp accepted a seat in Lord ——'s box at the opera for the next evening; and the one following that, he engaged to dine with Apsley. After his guests had retired, he betook himself to bed, with comparatively none of those heart-smitings which had kept him sleepless the night before. The men with whom he had been playing were evidently no professional gamblers, and he felt himself safe in their hands.

To the opera, pursuant to promise, he went, and to Apsley's. At the former he recognised several of his college acquaintance; and at the latter's house he spent a delightful evening, never having said better things, and never being more flatteringly attended to; and the night's social enjoyment was wound up with a friendly rubber for stakes laughably small. This was Sir Edward's scheme, for he was not, it will be recollected, to "*frighten* the bird." The doomed

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Beauchamp retired to rest, better satisfied with himself and his friends than ever; for he had transacted a little real business during the day; written two letters to the country, and despatched them, with a pair of magnificent bracelets, to Ellen; played the whole evening at unpretending whist, and won two guineas, instead of accompanying Lord —— and Hillier to the establishment in —— Street, where he *might* have lost hundreds. A worthy old English bishop says, "The devil then maketh sure of us, when we do make sure of ourselves." A wise maxim! Poor Beauchamp now began to feel confidence in his own strength of purpose. He thought he had been weighed in the balance, and *not* found wanting. He was as deeply convinced as ever of the pernicious effects of an inordinate love of play; but had he that passion? No! He recollected the healthful thrill of horror and disgust with which he listened to Lord ——'s entreaties to accompany him to the gaming-house, and was satisfied. He took an early opportunity of writing home, to apprise his mother and cousin that he intended to continue in town a month or six weeks, and assigned satisfactory reasons for his protracted stay. He wrote in the warmest terms to both of them, and said he should be counting the days till he threw himself into their arms. "'Tis this tiresome Twister, our attorney, that must answer for my long stay. There is no quickening his phlegmatic disposition! When I would hurry and press him, he shrugs his shoulders, and says there's no doing law by *steam*. He says he fears the Chancery affairs will prove very tedious; and they are in such a state just now, that, were I to return into the country, I should be summoned up to town again in a twinkling. Now, I *am* here, I will get all this business fairly off my hands. So, by this day six weeks, dearest coz, expect to see at your feet, yours eternally—H. B."

But, alas! that day saw Beauchamp in a new and startling character—that of an infatuated gamester!—During that fatal six weeks, he had lost several thousand pounds, and had utterly neglected the business which brought him up to town—for his whole heart was with French Hazard and Rouge et Noir! Even his outward appearance had undergone a strange alteration. His cheeks and forehead wore the sallow hue of dissipation—his eyes were weak and bloodshot—his hands trembled—and every movement indicated the highest degree of nervous irritability. He had become vexed and out of temper with all about him, but especially with himself, and never could "bring himself up to par" till seven or eight o'clock in the evening, at dinner, when he was warming with wine. The first thing in the mornings, also, he felt it necessary to fortify himself against the agitations of the day, by a smart draught of brandy or liqueur! If the mere love of temporary excitement had been sufficient, in the first instance, to allure him on to play, the desire for retrieving his losses, now supplied a stronger motive for persevering in his dangerous and destructive career. *Ten thousand pounds*, the lowest amount of his losses, was a sum he could not afford to lose, without very serious inconvenience. Gracious God! what would his aged mother—what would Ellen say, if they knew the mode and amount of his losses? The thought distracted him! He had drawn out of his banker's hands all the floating balance he had placed there on arriving in town; and, in short, he had been at last compelled to mortgage one of his favourite estates for £8000; and how to conceal the transaction from his mother, without making desperate and successful efforts to recover himself at play, he did not know. He had now got inextricably involved with Sir Edward and his set, who never allowed him a moment's time to come to himself, but were ever ready with diversified sources of amusement. Under their damned tutelage, Beauchamp commenced the systematic life of "a man about town," in all except the fouler and grosser vices, to which, I believe, he was never addicted.

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His money flew about in all directions. He never went to the establishment in —— Street, but his overnight's I.O.U.'s stared him in the face the next morning like reproachful fiends!—and he was daily accumulating bills at the fashionable tradesmen's, to whom he gave higher prices, to insure longer credit. While he was compelled to write down confidentially to old Pritchard, his agent, for money, almost every third or fourth post, his correspondence with his mother and cousin gradually slackened, and his letters, short as they were, indicated effort and constraint on the part of the writer. It was long, very long, before Mrs Beauchamp suspected that anything was going wrong. She was completely cajoled by her son's accounts of the complicated and harassing affairs in Chancery, and considered that circumstance fully to account for the brevity and infrequency of his letters. The quicker eyes of Ellen, however, soon saw, in the chilling shortness and formality of his letters to her, that even if his regard for her, personally, were not diminishing, he had discovered such pleasurable objects in town as enabled him to bear, with great fortitude, the *pangs of absence!*

Gaming exerts a deadening influence upon all the faculties of the soul that are not immediately occupied in its dreadful service. The *heart* it utterly withers; and it was not long, therefore, before Beauchamp was fully aware of the altered state of his feelings towards his cousin, and *satisfied* with them. Play—play—PLAY, was the name of his new and tyrannical mistress! Need I utter such commonplaces as to say, that the more Beauchamp played, the more he lost; that the more he lost, the deeper he played; and that the less chance there was, the more reckless he became? I cannot dwell on this dreary portion of my narrative. It is sufficient to inform the reader that, employed in the way I have mentioned, Beauchamp protracted his stay in London to *five months*. During this time he had actually gambled away THREE-FOURTHS of his whole fortune. He was now both ashamed and afraid of returning home. Letters from his poor mother and Ellen accumulated upon him, and often lay for weeks unanswered. Mrs Beauchamp had once remonstrated with him on his allowing *any* of his affairs to keep him so long in town, under the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed with respect to Ellen; but she received such a tart reply from her son as effectually prevented her future interference. She began to grow very uneasy, and to suspect that something or other unfortunate had happened to her son. Her fears hurried her into a disregard of his menaces; and at length she wrote up privately to Mr Twister, to know what was the state of affairs, and what kept Mr Beauchamp so harassingly employed. The poor old lady received for answer, that the attorney knew of nothing that need have detained Mr Beauchamp in town beyond a week; and that he had not been to Mr Twister's office for several *months!*

Pritchard, Mr Beauchamp's agent, was a quiet and faithful fellow, and managed all his master's concerns with the utmost punctuality and secresy. He had been elevated from the rank of a common servant in the family to his present office, which he had filled for thirty years with unspotted credit. He had been a great favourite with old Mr Beauchamp, who committed him to the kindness of Mrs Beauchamp, and requested her to continue him in his office till his son arrived at his majority. The good old man was therefore thoroughly identified with the family interests; and it was natural that he should feel both disquietude and alarm at the demands for money, unprecedented in respect of amount and frequency, made by Mr Beauchamp during his stay in town. He was kept in profound darkness as to the destination of the money, and confounded at having to forward up to London the title-deeds and papers relating to most of the property. "What *can* my young squire be driving at?" said Pritchard to himself; and, as he could devise no satisfactory

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answer, he began to fume and fret, and to indulge in melancholy speculations. He surmised that "all was not going on right at London;" for he was too much a man of business to be cajoled by the flimsy reasons assigned by Mr Beauchamp for requiring the estate papers. He began to suspect that his young master was "taking to bad courses;" but being enjoined silence at his peril, he held his tongue, and, shrugging his shoulders, "hoped the best." He longed every day to make, or find an opportunity for communicating with his old mistress; yet how could he break his master's confidence, and risk the threatened penalty! He received, however, a letter one morning which decided him. The fearful contents were as follows:—

"Dear and faithful old Pritchard,—There are now only two ways in which you can show your regard for me—profound secresy, and immediate attention to my directions. I have been engaged for some time in extensive speculations in London, and have been *dreadfully unfortunate*. I must have fifteen, or, at the very lowest, *ten* thousand pounds by this day week, or be ruined; and I purpose raising that sum by a mortgage on my property in ——shire. I can see no other possible way of meeting my engagements, without compromising the character of our family—the honour of my name. Let me, therefore, have all the needful papers in time—in two days' time at the latest. Dear old man!—for the love of God, and the respect you bear my father's memory, keep all this to yourself, or consequences may follow which I tremble to think of!—I am, &c. &c.

"Henry Beauchamp.

"—— *Hotel, 4 o'clock, A.M.*"

This letter was written with evident hurry and trepidation; but not with more than its perusal occasioned the affrighted steward. He dropped it from his hands, elevated them and his eyes towards heaven, and turned deadly pale. He trembled from head to foot; and the only words he uttered were, in a low moaning tone, "Oh, my poor old master! Wouldn't it raise your bones out of the grave?"—Could he any longer delay telling his mistress of the dreadful pass things were come to?

After an hour or two spent in terror and tears, he resolved, come what might, to set off for the Hall, seek an interview with Mrs Beauchamp, and disclose everything. He had scarcely got half-way, when he was met by one of the Hall servants, who stopped him, saying—"Oh, Mr Steward, I was coming down for you. Mistress is in a *way* this morning, and wants to see you directly."

The old man hardly heard him out, and hurried on as fast as possible to the Hall, which was pervaded with an air of excitement and suspense. He was instantly conducted into Mrs Beauchamp's private room. The good old lady sat in her easy-chair, her pallid features full of grief, and her grey locks straying in disorder from under the border of her cap. Every limb was in a tremor. On one side of her sat Ellen, in the same agitated condition as her aunt; and on the other stood a table with brandy, hartshorn, &c., and an open letter.

"Be seated, Pritchard," said the old lady faintly. The steward placed his chair beside the table. "Why, what is the matter with *you*, Pritchard?" inquired Miss Beauchamp, startled by the agitation and fright manifested in the steward's countenance. He drew his hand across his forehead, and stammered that he was grieved to see them in such trouble, when he was interrupted by Mrs Beauchamp putting the open letter into his hand, and telling him to read it. The steward could scarcely adjust his glasses; for he trembled like an aspen leaf. He read—

"Madam,—My client, Lady Hester Gripe, having consented to advance a *farther* sum of £22,000 to Mr Henry Beauchamp, your son, on mortgage of his estates in ——shire, I beg to know whether you have any annuity or rent-charge issuing therefrom, and, if so,

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to what amount. I beg you will consider this inquiry strictly confidential, as between Lady Hester and Mr Beauchamp, or the negotiations will be broken off; for her ladyship's extreme caution has induced me to break through my promise to Mr Beauchamp, of not allowing you, or any one else, to know of the transaction. As, however, Mr Beauchamp said, that, even if you *did* know, it was not of much consequence, I presume I have not gone very far wrong in yielding to her ladyship's importunities. May I beg the favour of a reply, per return of post?—I have the honour, &c. &c. &c.

"*Furnival's Inn, London.*"

Before the staggered steward had got through half this letter he was obliged to lay it down for a moment or two, to recover from his trepidation.

"A FARTHER sum!" he muttered. He wiped the cold perspiration from his forehead, dashed out the tears from his half-blinded eyes, and resumed his perusal of the letter, which shook in his hands. No one spoke a syllable; and, when he had finished reading, he laid down the letter in silence. Mrs Beauchamp sat, leaning back in her chair, with her eyes closed. She murmured something, which the straining ear of the steward could not catch.

"What was my lady saying, miss?" he inquired. Miss Beauchamp shook her head, without speaking, or removing her handkerchief from her face.

"Well, God's holy will be done!" exclaimed Mrs Beauchamp, feebly tasting a little brandy and water; "but I'm afraid my poor Henry—and all of us—are ruined!"

"God grant not, my lady! Oh, don't—don't say so, my lady!" sobbed the steward, dropping involuntarily upon his knees, and elevating his clasped hands upwards—"'Tis true, my lady," he continued, "Master Henry—for I can't help calling him so—has been a little wild in London—but *all* is not yet gone—oh no, my lady, no!"

"*You* must, of course, have known all along of his doings—you *must*, Pritchard!" said Mrs Beauchamp in a low tone.

"Why, yes, my lady, I have—but I've gone down on my knees every blessed night, and prayed that I might find a way of letting you know"——

"*Why* could you not have told me?" inquired Mrs Beauchamp, looking keenly at the steward.

"Because, my lady, I was his steward, and bound to keep his confidence. He would have discharged me the moment I had opened my lips; he told me so often!"

Mrs Beauchamp made no reply. She saw the worthy man's dilemma, and doubted not his integrity, though she had entertained momentarily a suspicion of his guilty acquiescence.

"Have you ever heard, Pritchard, how the money has gone in London?"

"Never a breath, my lady, that I could rely on."

"What have you *heard?*—That he frequents gaming-houses?" inquired Mrs Beauchamp, her features whitening as she went on. The steward shook his head. There was another mournful pause.

"Now, Pritchard," said Mrs Beauchamp, with an effort to muster up all her calmness—"tell me, as in the sight of God, how much money has my son made away with since he left?"

The steward paused and hesitated.

"I must not be trified with, Pritchard," continued Mrs Beauchamp, solemnly, and with increasing agitation. The steward seemed calculating a moment.

"Why, my lady, if I must be plain, I'm afraid that twenty thousand pounds would not cover"——

"TWENTY THOUSAND POUNDS!" screamed Miss Beauchamp, springing out of her chair wildly; but her attention was, in an instant, absorbed by her aunt, who, on hearing the sum named by the steward, after moving her lips for a moment or two, as if she were trying to speak, suddenly fell back in her seat, and swooned.

To describe the scenes of consternation and despair which ensued, would be impossible. Mrs Beauchamp's feelings were several times urging her on

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the very borders of madness; and Miss Beauchamp looked the image of speechless, breathless horror. At length, however, Mrs Beauchamp succeeded in overcoming her feelings—for she was a woman of unusual strength of mind—and instantly addressed herself to meet the naked horrors of the case, and see if it were possible to discover or apply a remedy. After a day's anxious thought, and the *show* of a consultation with her distracted niece, she decided on the line of operation she intended to pursue.

To return, however, to her son. Things went on, as might be supposed from the situation in which we left him, worse and worse. Poor Beauchamp's life might justly be said to be a perpetual frenzy—passed in alternate paroxysms of remorse, despair, rage, fear, and all the other baleful passions that can tear and distract the human soul. He had become stupefied; and could not fully comprehend the enormous ruin which he had precipitated upon himself—crushing at once "mind, body, and estate." His motions seemed actuated by a species of diabolical influence. He saw the nest of hornets which he had lit upon, yet would not forsake the spot! Alas! Beauchamp was not the first who has felt the fatal *fascination* of play, the utter obliviousness of consequences which it induces! The demons who fluttered about him no longer thought of masking themselves, but stood boldly in all their naked hideousness before him. For weeks together, he had one continual run of bad luck; yet still he lived and gambled on, from week to week, from day to day, from hour to hour, in the delusive hope of recovering himself. His heart was paralysed—its feelings all smothered beneath the perpetual pressure of a gamester's anxieties. It is not, therefore, difficult for the reader to conceive the ease with which he dismissed the less and less frequently intruding images—the pale reproachful faces—of his mother and cousin!

Sir Edward Streighton, the most consummate tactician, sure, that ever breathed, had won thousands from Beauchamp, without affording him a tangible opportunity of breaking with him. On the contrary, the more Beauchamp became involved—the deeper he sank into the whirlpool of destruction—the closer he clung to Sir Edward; as if clinging to the devil in hell would save one from its fires! The wily baronet had contrived to make himself, in a manner, indispensable to Beauchamp. It was Sir Edward who taught him the quickest way of turning lands into cash—Sir Edward, who familiarised him with the correctest principles of betting and handling the dice—Sir Edward, who put him in the way of evading and defying his minor creditors—Sir Edward, who feasted and fêted him out of his bitter ennui and thoughts of ——shire—Sir Edward, who lent him hundreds at a moment's warning, and gave him the longest credit!

Is it really conceivable that Beauchamp could not see through the plausible scoundrel? inquires, perhaps, a reader. No, he did not, till the plot began to develope itself in the latter acts of the tragedy! And even when he did, he still went on—and on—and on—trusting that, in time, he should outwit the subtle devil. Though he was a little shocked at finding himself so easily capable of such a thing, he resolved at last, in the forlorn hope of retrieving his circumstances, to meet *fraud with fraud*. A delusion not uncommon among the desperate victims of gambling, is the notion that they have suddenly hit on some trick by which they must infallibly win. This is the *ignis fatuus* which often lights them to the fatal verge. Such a crotchet had latterly been flitting through the fancy of Beauchamp; and one night—or rather morning—after revolving the scheme over and over again in his racked brain, he started out of bed, struck a light, seized a pack of cards, and, shivering with cold—for it was winter—sat calculating and manœuvring with them till he had satisfied himself of the accuracy of his plan; when he threw them down, blew out his candle, and leaped into bed again in a fit of guilty ecstasy. The more he turned the project in his

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mind, the more and more feasible did it appear. He resolved to intrust no one breathing with his secret. Confident of success, and that, with but little effort, he had it in his power *to break the bank*, whenever, and as often as he pleased, he determined to put his plan into execution in a day or two, on a large scale; stake every penny he could possibly scrape together, and win triumphantly. He instantly set about procuring the requisite funds. His attorney—a gambler himself, whom he had latterly picked up, at the instance of Hillier, as "a monstrously convenient fellow"—soon contrived to cash his I.O.U.'s to the amount of £5000, on discovering that he had still available property in ——shire, which he learned at a confidential interview with the solicitor in Furnival's Inn, who was negotiating the loan of £22,000 from Lady Gripe.* He returned to make the hazardous experiment on the evening of the day on which he received the £5000 from his attorney. On the morning of that day, he was, farther, to hear from his steward in the country respecting the mortgage of his last and best property.

That was a memorable—a terrible day to Beauchamp. It *began* with doubt—suspense—disappointment; for after awaiting the call of the postman, shaking with agitation, he caught a glimpse of his red jacket *passing* by his door—on the other side of the street. Almost frantic, he threw up the window, and called out to him—but the man had "none to-day." Beauchamp threw himself on his sofa, in agony unutterable. It was the first time that old Pritchard had ever neglected to return an answer in course of post, when never so slightly requested. A thousand fears assailed him. Had his letter miscarried? Was Pritchard ill, dying, or dead? Had he been frightened into a disclosure to Mrs Beauchamp? And did his Mother, at length—did Ellen—know of his dreadful doings? The thought was too frightful to dwell upon!—thoroughly unnerved, he flew to *brandy*—fiery fiend, lighting up in the brain the flames of madness!—He scarcely knew how to rest during the interval between breakfast and dinner; for at seven o'clock, he, together with the rest of the infernal crew, were to dine with Apsley. There was to be a strong muster; for one of the *decoys* had entrapped a wealthy simpleton, who was to make his "first appearance" that evening. After walking, for an hour, to and fro, he set out to call upon me. He was at my house by twelve o'clock. During his stay in town, I had frequently received him in quality of a patient, for his trifling fits of indisposition and low spirits. I had looked upon him merely as a fashionable young fellow, who was "upon town" doing his best to earn a little notoriety, such as was sought after by most young men of *spirit*—and fortune! I also had been able to gather, from what he let fall at several interviews, that the uneven spirits he enjoyed were owing to his gambling propensities; that his excitement or depression alternated with the good or ill luck he had at play. I felt interest in him; for there was about him an air of ingenuousness and straight-forwardness which captivated every one who spoke with him. His manners had all the ease and blandness of the finished gentleman; and when last I saw him, which was about two months before, he appeared in good health and cheerful spirits—a very fine, if not strictly handsome man. But *now*, when he stood before me, wasted in person, and haggard in feature—full of irritability and petulance—I could scarcely believe him the same man!—I was going to ask him some question or other, when he hastily interrupted me, by extending towards me his two hands, which shook almost like those of a man in the palsy, exclaiming—"This—*this*, doctor, is what I have come about.

* It is my intention, on a future occasion, to publish some account of the extraordinary means by which this old woman amassed a splendid fortune. She was an inveterate swindler at cards; and so successful that, from her gains at ordinary play, she drew a capital with which she traded in the manner mentioned above.

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Can you cure THIS—by six o'clock to-day?" There was a wildness in his manner, which led me to suspect that his intellect was disordered. He hurried on, before I had time to get in a word—"If you cannot steady my nerves for a few hours, I am"—— he suddenly paused, and, with some confusion, repeated his question. The extravagant impetuosity of his gestures, and his whole demeanour, alarmed me.

"Mr Beauchamp," said I seriously, "it is now two months since you honoured me with a visit; and your appearance since then is wofully changed. Permit me, as a respectful friend, to ask whether"—— He rose abruptly from his seat, and, in a tone bordering on insult, replied, "Dr ——, I came, not to gratify curiosity, but to receive your advice on the state of my health. If you are not disposed to afford it me, I am intruding."

"You mistake me, Mr Beauchamp," I replied calmly, "motives and all. I do not wish to pry into your affairs. I desired only to ascertain whether or not your mind was at ease." While I was speaking, he seemed boiling over with suppressed irritability; and when I had done, he took his hat and stick, flung a guinea on my desk, and, before I could recover from the astonishment his extraordinary behaviour occasioned me, strode out of the room.

How he contrived to pass the day he never knew; but about five o'clock he retired to his dressing-room, to prepare for dinner.* His agitation had reached such a height, that, after several ineffectual attempts to shave himself, he was compelled to send for some one to perform that operation for him. When the duties of the dressing-room were completed, he returned to his sitting-room, took from his escritoire the doomed bank-notes for £5000, and placed them in his pocket-book. A dense film floated before his eyes, when he attempted to look over the respective amounts of the bills, to see that all was correct. He then seized a pack of cards, and tried over and over again to test the accuracy of his calculations. He laid them aside when he had satisfied himself—locked his door, opened his desk, and took out pen and paper. He then, with his penknife, pricked the point of one of his fingers, filled his pen with the blood issuing from it, and wrote, in letters of blood, a solemn oath, that, if he were but successful that evening, in "winning back his own," he would forsake cards and dice for ever, and never again be found within the precincts of a gaming-house, to the latest hour of his life. I have seen that singular and affecting document. The letters, especially those forming the signature, are more like the tremulous handwriting of a man of eighty, than of one but twenty-one! Perceiving that he was late, he hurriedly affixed a black seal to his signature—once more ran his eye over the doomed £5000, and sallied out to dinner.

When he reached Mr Apsley's, he found all the company assembled, apparently in high spirits, and all eager for dinner. You would not have thought of the black hearts that beat beneath such gay and pleasing exteriors as were collected round Apsley's table! Not a syllable of allusion was made during dinner-time to the subject which filled every one's thoughts—play! As if by mutual consent, that seemed the only interdicted topic; but as soon as dinner and dessert, both of them first-rate, were over, a perfectly understood *pause* took place; and Beauchamp, who, with the aid of frequent draughts of champagne, had worked himself up to the proper pitch, was the first to propose with eagerness the fatal adjournment to the gaming-table. Every one rose in an instant from his seat as if by appointed signal, and in less than five minutes' time, they were all, with closed doors, seated around the tables;—

Here piles of cards, and there the damned dice.

They opened with Hazard. Beauchamp was the first who threw, and he lost; but as the stake was com-

* Mr Beauchamp had removed from his hotel into private lodgings near Pall-Mall, about a month before the above-mentioned visit to me.

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paratively trifling, he neither was, nor appeared to be annoyed. He was saving himself for Rouge et Noir!—The rest of the company proceeded with the game, and got gradually into deeper play, till at length heavy betting was begun. Beauchamp, who declined joining them, sat watching, with peculiar feelings of mingled sympathy and contempt, the poor fellow whom the gang were "pigeoning."

How painfully it reminded him of his own initiation! A throng of bitter recollections crowded irresistibly through his mind, as he sat for a while with leisure for contemplation. The silence that was maintained was broken only by the rattling of the dice-box, and an occasional whisper when the dice were thrown.

The room in which they were sitting was furnished with splendour and elegance. The walls were entirely concealed beneath valuable pictures in massive and tasteful frames, the gilding of which glistened with a peculiarly rich effect beneath the light of a noble ormolu lamp, suspended from the ceiling. Ample curtains of yellow flowered satin, drawn closely together, concealed the three windows with their rich draperies; and a few Gothic-fashioned bookcases, well filled, were stationed near the corners of the room, with rare specimens of Italian statuary placed upon them. The furniture was all of the most fashionable and elegant patterns; and as the trained eye of Beauchamp scanned it over, and marked the correct taste with which everything was disposed, the thought forced itself upon him—"How many have been beggared to pay for all this!" His heart fluttered. He gazed on the flushed features, the eager eyes, the agitated gestures of those who sat at the table. Directly opposite was Sir Edward Streighton, looking attentively at the caster—his fine expansive forehead bordered with slight streaks of black hair, and his large lustrous eyes glancing like lightning from the thrower to the dice, and from the dice to the betters. His features, regular, and once even handsome, bore now the deep traces of long and harrowing anxiety. "Oh, that one," thought Beauchamp, "so capable of better things, bearing on his brow nature's signet of superiority, should have sunk into—*a swindler!*" While these thoughts were passing through his mind, Sir Edward suddenly looked up, and his eyes settled for an instant on Beauchamp. Their expression almost withered him! He thought he was gazing on "the dark and guilty one," who had coldly led him up to ruin's brink, and was waiting to precipitate him. His thoughts then wandered away to long banished scenes—his aged mother, his ruined forsaken Ellen, both of whom he was beggaring, and breaking their hearts. A mist seemed diffused through the room—his brain reeled; his long-stunned heart revived for a moment, and smote him heavily. "Oh! that I had but an opportunity—never so slight an opportunity," he thought, "of breaking from this horrid enthralment, at *any* cost!" He started from his painful reverie, and stepped to a side-table, on which a large bowl of champagne punch had just been placed, and sought solace in its intoxicating fumes. He resumed his seat at the table; and he had looked on scarcely a few minutes, before he felt a sudden, unaccountable impulse to join in at Hazard. He saw Apsley placing in his pocket-book some bank-notes, which he had that moment received from the poor victim before spoken of—and instantly betted with him heavily on the next throw. Apsley, somewhat surprised, but not ruffled, immediately took him; the dice were thrown, and to his own astonishment, and that of all present, Beauchamp won £300; actually, *bona fide*, won £300 from Apsley, who, for once, was off his guard! The loser was nettled, and could with difficulty conceal his chagrin; but he had seen, while Beauchamp was in the act of opening his pocket-book, the amount of one or two of his largest bills, and his passion subsided.

At length his hour arrived. Rouge et Noir followed Hazard, and Beauchamp's pulse quickened. When it came to his turn, he took out his

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pocket-book and coolly laid down stakes which aimed at the bank. Not a word was spoken; but looks of wonder and doubt glanced darkly around the table. What was the fancied manœuvre which Beauchamp now proceeded to practise, I know not; for, thank God, I am ignorant—except on hearsay—of both the principles and practice of gaming. The eagle eye of Apsley, the *tailler*, was on Beauchamp's every movement. He tried—he LOST, *half* his large stake! He pressed his hand upon his forehead—he saw that everything depended on his calmness. The voice of Apsley sounded indistinctly in his ears, calling out "*aprés!*" Beauchamp suffered his stakes to remain, and be determined by the next event. He still had confidence in his scheme; but, alas! the bubble at length burst, and Beauchamp, in a trice, found himself minus £3000. All hope was now over, for his trick was clearly worth nothing, and he had lost every earthly opportunity of recovering himself. YET HE WENT ON—and on—and on—and on ran the losing colour, till Beauchamp lost everything he had brought with him! He sat down, sunk his head upon his breast, and a ghastly hue overspread his face. He was offered unlimited credit. Apsley gave him a slip of paper with I.O.U. on it, telling him to fill it up with his name, and any sum he chose. Beauchamp threw it back, exclaiming, in an under tone, "No—swindled out of *all*."

"*What* did you say, sir?" inquired Apsley, rising from the table, and approaching his victim.

"Merely that I have been swindled out of all my fortune," replied Beauchamp, without rising from his seat. There was a dead silence.

"But, my good sir! don't you know that such language will never *do?*" inquired Apsley, in a cold contemptuous tone, and with a manner exquisitely irritating.

Half maddened with his losses—with despair and fury—Beauchamp sprung out of his chair towards Apsley, and, with an absolute *howl*, dashed both his fists into his face. Consternation seized every one present. Table, cards, and bank-notes, all were deserted, and some threw themselves round Beauchamp, others round Apsley, who, sudden as had been the assault upon him, had so quickly thrown up his arms, that he parried the chief force of Beauchamp's blow, and received but a slight injury over his right eye.

"Poh! poh! the boy is *drunk*," he exclaimed coolly, observing his frantic assailant struggling with those who held him.

"Ruffian! swindler! liar!" gasped Beauchamp. Apsley laughed aloud.

"What! dare not you strike me in return?" roared Beauchamp.

"Ay, ay, my fine fellow," replied Apsley, with imperturbable nonchalance; "but dare *you* have struck me when you were in cool blood, and I on my guard?"

"*Struck* you, indeed, you abhorred"——

"Let us see, then, what we can do in the morning, when we've slept over it," retorted Apsley, pitching his card towards him contemptuously. "But, in the mean time, we must send for constables, unless our young friend here becomes quiet. Come, Streighton, you are croupier—come, Hillier—Bruton—all of you come—play out the stakes, or we shall forget where we were."

Poor Beauchamp seemed suddenly calmed when Apsley's card was thrown towards him, and with such cold scorn. He pressed his hands to his bursting temples, turning his despairing eyes upwards, and muttered, as if he were half choked, "Not yet—not yet!" He paused, and the dreadful paroxysm seemed to subside. He threw one of his cards to Apsley, exclaiming hoarsely, "When, where, and how you will, sir!"

"Why, come now, Beau, that's right—*that's* like a man!" said Apsley with mock civility. "Suppose we say to-morrow morning? I have cured you of roguery to-night, and, with the blessing of God, will cure you of cowardice to-morrow. But, pardon me, your last stakes are forfeit," he added abruptly,

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seeing Beauchamp approach the spot where his last stake, a bill for £100, was lying, not having been taken up. He looked appealingly to the company, who decided instantly against him. Beauchamp, with the hurry and agitation consequent on his assault upon Apsley, had forgotten that he had really played away the note.

"Well, sir, there remains nothing to keep me here," said Beauchamp calmly—with the calmness of despair—"except settling our morning's meeting. Name your friend, sir," he continued sternly—yet his heart was breaking within him.

"Oh—ay," replied Apsley, carelessly looking up from the cards he was shuffling and arranging. "Let me see. Hillier, will you do the needful for me? I leave everything in your hands." After vain attempts to bring about a compromise—for your true gamblers hate such affairs, not from personal fear, but the publicity they occasion to their doings—matters were finally arranged, Sir Edward Streighton undertaking for Beauchamp. The hour of meeting was half-past six o'clock in the morning; and the place a field near Knightsbridge. The unhappy Beauchamp then withdrew, after shaking Sir Edward by the hand, who promised to call at his lodgings by four o'clock—"for we shall break up by that time, I dare say," he whispered.

When the door was closed upon Beauchamp, he reeled off the steps, and staggered along the street like a drunken man. Whether or not he was deceived he knew not; but, in passing under the windows of the room where the fiendish conclave were sitting, he fancied he heard the sound of loud laughter. It was about two o'clock of a winter's morning. The snow fell fast, and the air was freezingly cold. Not a soul but himself seemed stirring. A watchman, seeing his unsteady gait, crossed the street, touched his hat, and asked if he should call him a coach; but he was answered with such a ghastly imprecation, that he slunk back in silence. Tongue cannot tell the distraction and misery with which Beauchamp's soul was shaken. Hell seemed to have lit its raging fires within him. He felt affrighted at being alone in the desolate, dark, deserted streets. His last six months' life seemed unrolled suddenly before him, like a blighting scroll, written in letters of fire. Overcome by his emotions, his shaking knees refused their support, and he sat down on the steps of a house in Piccadilly. He told me afterwards, that he distinctly recollected feeling for some implement of destruction; and that, if he had discovered his penknife, he should assuredly have cut his throat. After sitting on the stone for about a quarter of an hour bareheaded, for he had removed his hat, that his burning forehead might be cooled, he made towards his lodgings. He thundered impetuously at the door, and was instantly admitted. His shivering half-asleep servant fell back before his master's affrighting countenance, and glaring bloodshot eyes. "Lock the door, sir, and follow me to my room!" said Beauchamp, in a loud voice.

"Sir—sir—sir," stammered the servant, as if he were going to ask some question.

"Silence, sir!" thundered his master; and the man, laying down his candle on the stairs, went and barred the door. Beauchamp hurried upstairs, and opened the door of his sitting-room. He was astonished and alarmed to find a blaze of light in the room. Suspecting fire, he rushed into the middle of the room, and beheld—his mother and cousin bending towards him, and staring fixedly at him with the hue and expression of two marble images of horror! His mother's white hair hung dishevelled down each side of her ghastly features; and her eyes, with those of her niece, who sat beside her, clasping her aunt convulsively round the waist, seemed on the point of starting from their sockets. They moved not—they spoke not. The hideous apparition vanished in an instant from the darkening eyes of Beauchamp, for he dropped the candle he held in his hand, and fell at full length senseless on the floor.

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It was no ocular delusion—nothing spectral—but HORROR looking out through breathing flesh and blood, in the persons of Mrs Beauchamp and her niece.

The resolution which Mrs Beauchamp had formed on an occasion which will be remembered by the reader, was to go up direct to London, and try the effect of a sudden appearance before her erring, but she hoped, not irreclaimable son. Such an interview might *startle* him into a return to virtue. Attended by the faithful Pritchard, they had arrived in town that very day, put up at a hotel in the neighbourhood, and, without pausing to take refreshments, hurried to Mr Beauchamp's lodgings, which he reached only two hours after he had gone out to dinner. Seeing his desk open, and a paper lying upon it, the old lady took it up, and, freezing with fright, read the oath before named, evidently written in *blood*. Her son, then, was gone to the gaming-table in the spirit of a forlorn hope, and was that night to complete his and their ruin! Yet what could they do? Mr Beauchamp's valet did not know where his master was gone to dinner, nor did any one in the house, or they would have sent off instantly to apprize him of their arrival. As it was, however, they were obliged to wait for it; and it may, therefore, be conceived in what an ecstasy of agony these two poor ladies had been sitting, without tasting wine or food, till half-past two o'clock in the morning, when they heard his startling knock—his fierce voice speaking in curses to the valet—and, at length, beheld him rush, madman-like, into their presence, as has been described.

When the valet came up-stairs from fastening the street door, he saw the sitting-room door wide open; and peeping through, on his way up to bed, was confounded to see three prostrate figures on the floor—his master here, and there the two ladies, locked in one another's arms, all motionless. He hurried to the bell; and pulled it till it broke, but not before it had rung such a startling peal as woke everybody in the house, who presently heard him shouting, at the top of his voice, "Murder! murder! murder!" All the affrighted inmates were, in a few seconds, in the room, half-dressed, and their faces full of terror. The first simultaneous impression on the minds of the group was, that the persons lying on the floor had been *poisoned*; and under such impression was it that I and two neighbouring surgeons were summoned on the scene. By the time I had arrived, Mrs Beauchamp was reviving; but her niece had swooned away again. The first impulse of the mother, as soon as her tottering limbs could support her weight, was to crawl trembling to the insensible body of her son. Supported in the arms of two female attendants, who had not as yet been able to lift her from the floor, she leant over the prostrate form of Beauchamp, and murmured, "O, Henry! Henry! Love!—my only love!" Her hand played slowly over his damp features, and strove to part the hair from the forehead—but it suddenly ceased to move—and, on looking narrowly at her, she was found to have swooned again. Of all the sorrowful scenes it has been my fate to witness, I never encountered one of deeper distress than this.—Had I known at the time the relative situations of the parties!

I directed all my attentions to Mr Beauchamp, while the other medical gentlemen busied themselves with Mrs Beauchamp and her niece. I was not quite sure whether my patient were not in a fit of epilepsy or apoplexy; for he lay motionless, drawing his breath at long and painful intervals, with a little occasional convulsive twitching of the features. I had his coat taken off immediately, and bled him from the arm copiously; soon after which he recovered his consciousness, and allowed himself to be led to bed. He had hardly been undressed, before he fell fast asleep. His mother was bending over him in speechless agony—for, ill and feeble as she was, we could not prevail on her to go to bed—and I was watching both with deep interest and curiosity, convinced that I was witnessing a glimpse of

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some domestic tragedy, when there was heard a violent knocking and ringing at the street door. Every one started, and, with alarm, inquired what that *could* be! Who could be seeking admission at four o'clock in the morning? Sir Edward Streighton!—whose cabriolet, with a case of duelling pistols on the seat, was standing at the door, waiting to convey himself and Beauchamp to the scene of possible slaughter fixed on over-night. He would take no denial from the servant; declared his business to be of the most pressing kind; and affected to disbelieve the fact of Beauchamp's illness—"It was all miserable fudge;" and he was heard muttering something about "*cowardice!*" The strange pertinacity of Sir Edward brought me down stairs. He stood fuming and cursing in the hall; but started on seeing me come down, with a candle in my hand, and he turned pale.

"Doctor ——!" he exclaimed, taking off his hat; for he had once or twice seen me, and instantly recognised me—"Why, in the name of Heaven, what is the matter? Is he ill? Is he dead? What?"

"Sir Edward," I replied coldly, "Mr Beauchamp is in dangerous, if not dying, circumstances."

"*Dying* circumstances!" he echoed, with an alarmed air. "Why—has he—has he attempted to commit suicide?" he stammered.

"No, but he has had a fit, and is insensible in bed. You will permit me to say, Sir Edward," I continued, a suspicion occurring to me of his design in calling, "that this untimely visit looks as if"——

"That is my business, doctor," he replied haughtily, "not yours. My errand is of the highest importance; and it is fitting I should be assured, on your solemn word of honour, of the *reality* of Mr Beauchamp's illness."

"Sir Edward Streighton," said I indignantly, "you have had my answer, which you may believe or disbelieve, as you think proper; but I will, at all events, take good care that you do not ascend one of these stairs to-day."

"I understand it all!" he answered, with a significant scowl, and left the house. I then hastened back to my patient, whom I now viewed with greater interest than before; for I saw that he was to have fought a duel that morning. Coupling present appearances with Mr Beauchamp's visit to me the day before, and the known character of Sir Edward as a professed gambler, the key to the whole seemed to me, that there had been a gaming-house quarrel.

The first sensible words that Mr Beauchamp spoke, were to me:—"Has Sir Edward Streighton called?—Is it four o'clock yet?" and he started up in his bed, staring wildly around him. Seeing himself in bed—candles about him—and *me* at his side—he exclaimed, "Why, I recollect nothing of it! Am I wounded? What has become of Apsley?" He placed his hand on the arm from which he had been bled, and, feeling it bandaged—"Ah!—in the arm—How strange that I have forgotten it all!—How did I get on at Hazard and Rouge et Noir?—Doctor, am I badly wounded?—Bone broken?"

My conjecture was now verified beyond a doubt. He dropped asleep, from excessive exhaustion, while I was gazing at him. I had answered none of his questions, which were proposed in a dreamy unconnected style, indicating that his senses were disturbed. Finding that I could be of no further service at present, I left him, and betook myself to the room to which Mrs Beauchamp had been removed while I was conversing with Sir Edward. I found her in bed, attended by Miss Beauchamp, who, though still extremely languid, and looking the picture of broken-heartedness, had made a great exertion to rouse herself. Mrs Beauchamp looked dreadfully ill. The nerves seemed to have received a shock from which she might be long in recovering. "Now, what is breaking these ladies' hearts?" thought I, as I looked from one agitated face to the other.

"How is my son?" inquired Mrs Beauchamp faintly.

I told her I thought there was no

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danger; and that, with repose, he would soon recover.

"Pray, madam, allow me to ask—Has he had any sudden fright? I suspect"—— Both shook their heads, and hung them down.

"Well—he is alive, thank Heaven—but a *beggar!*" murmured Mrs Beauchamp. "Oh, doctor, he hath *fallen among thieves!*" They have robbed, and would have slain my son—my first-born—my only son!"

I expressed deep sympathy. I said, "I suspect, madam, that something very unfortunate has happened."

She interrupted me, by asking, after a pause, if I knew nothing of his practices in London for the last few months, as she had seen my name several times mentioned in his letters, as his medical adviser. I made no reply. I did not even hint my suspicions that he had been a frequenter of the gaming-table; but my looks startled her.

"Oh, Doctor ——, for the love of God, be frank, and save a widowed mother's heart from breaking! Is there no door open for him to escape?"

Seeing they could extract little or no satisfactory explanation from me, they ceased asking, and resigned themselves to tears and sorrow. After rendering them what little service was in my power, and looking in at Mr Beauchamp's room, where I found him still in a comfortable sleep, I took my departure; for the dull light of a winter morning was already stealing into the room, and I had been there ever since a little before four o'clock. All my way home I felt sure that my patient was one of the innumerable victims of gambling, and had involved his family in his ruin.

Mr Beauchamp, with the aid of quiet and medicine, soon recovered sufficiently to leave his bed; but his mind was evidently ill at ease. Had I known at the time what I was afterwards apprised of, with what intense and sorrowful interest should I have regarded him!

The next week was all agony, humiliation, confessions, and forgiveness. The only one item in the black catalogue which he omitted or misrepresented, was the duel he was to have fought. He owned, after much pressing, in order to quiet his mother and cousin, that he *had* fought, and escaped unhurt. But Beauchamp, in his own mind, was resolved, at all events, to give Apsley the meeting on the very earliest opportunity. His own *honour* was at stake!—his own revenge was to be sated! The first thing, therefore, that Beauchamp did, after he was sufficiently recovered to be left alone, was to drop a hasty line to Sir Edward Streighton, informing him that he was now ready and willing—nay, anxious to give Apsley the meeting, which he had been prevented doing only by his sudden and severe illness. He entreated Sir Edward to continue, as heretofore, his *friend*, and to hasten the matter as much as possible; adding that, whatever event might attend it, was a matter of utter indifference to one who was weary of life. Sir Edward, who began to wish himself out of a very disagreeable affair, returned him a prompt, polite, but not very cordial answer; the substance of which was, that Apsley, who happened to be with Sir Edward when Beauchamp's letter arrived, was perfectly ready to meet him at the place formerly appointed, at seven o'clock on the ensuing morning. Beauchamp was somewhat shocked at the suddenness of the affair. How was he to part, over-night—possibly for ever—from his beloved, and injured as beloved, mother and cousin? Whatever might be the issue of the affair, what a monster of perfidy and ingratitude must he appear to them!

Full of these bitter, distracting thoughts, he locked his room door, and proceeded to make his will. He left "everything he had remaining on earth, in any shape," to his mother, except a hundred guineas to his cousin, to buy a mourning ring. That over, and some few other arrangements completed, he repaired, with a heart that smote him at every step, to his mother's bedside; for it was night, and the old lady, besides, scarcely ever left her bed. The unusual fervour of his embraces, together with momen-

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tary fits of absence, might have challenged observation and suspicion; but they did not. He told me afterwards, that the anguish he suffered while repeating and going through the customary evening adieus to his mother and cousin, might have atoned for years of guilt!

After a nearly sleepless night, Beauchamp rose about five o'clock, and dressed himself. On quitting his room, perhaps the last time he should quit it alive, he had to pass by his mother's door. There he fell down on his knees; and continued, with clasped hands and closed eyes, till his smothering emotions warned him to be gone. He succeeded in getting out of the house without alarming any one; and, muffled in his cloak, made his way, as fast as possible, to Sir Edward Streighton's. It was a miserable morning. The untrodden snow lay nearly a foot deep on the streets, and was yet fluttering fast down. Beauchamp found it so fatiguing to *plunther* on through the deep snow, and was so benumbed with cold, that he called a coach. He had great difficulty in rousing the driver, who, spite of the bitter inclemency of the weather, was sitting on his box, poor fellow, fast asleep, and even snoring—a complete hillock of snow, which lay nearly an inch thick upon him. How Beauchamp envied him! The very horses, too, lean and scraggy as they looked—fast asleep—their scanty harness all snow-laden—how he envied *them!*

It was nearly six o'clock when Beauchamp reached Sir Edward's residence. The baronet was up, and waiting for him.

"How d'ye do, Beauchamp—how d'ye do?—How the d—— are you to fight in such a fog as this?" he inquired, looking through the window, and shuddering at the cold.

"It must be managed, I suppose. Put us up as close as you like," replied Beauchamp gloomily.

"I've done all in my power, my dear fellow, to settle matters amicably, but 'tis in vain, I'm afraid. You *must* exchange shots, you know!—I have no doubt, however," he continued, with a significant smile, "that the thing will be properly conducted. *Life is valuable, Beauchamp!* You understand me?"

"It is *not* to me—I hate Apsley as I hate hell."

"My God, Beauchamp! what a bloody humour you have risen in!" exclaimed the baronet, with an anxious smile. He paused, as if for an answer, but Beauchamp continued silent. "Ah, then, the sooner to business the better! And harkee, Beauchamp," said Sir Edward briskly, "have your wits about you; for Apsley, let me tell you, is a splendid shot!"

"Pooh!" exclaimed Beauchamp, smiling bitterly. He felt cold from head to foot, and even trembled; for a thousand fond thoughts gushed over him. He felt faint, and would have asked for a glass of wine or spirits; but after Sir Edward's last remark, that was out of the question. It might be misconstrued!

They were on the ground by seven o'clock. It had ceased snowing, and in its stead a small drizzling rain was falling. The fog continued so dense as to prevent their seeing each other distinctly at more than a few yards' distance. This puzzled the parties not a little, and threatened to interfere with *business*.

"Everything, by ——, is against us to-day!" exclaimed Sir Edward, placing under his arm the pistol he was loading, and buttoning his great-coat up to the chin—"this fog will hinder your seeing one another, and this —— rain will soak through to the priming! In fact, you must be put up within eight or ten feet of one another."

"Settle all that as soon, and as you like," replied Beauchamp, walking away a few steps.

"Hallo—here!—here!" cried Sir Edward—"Here! here we are, Hillier," seeing three figures within a few yards of them, searching about for them. Apsley had brought with him Hillier and a young surgeon.

The fog thickened rapidly as soon



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as they had come together, and Apsley and Beauchamp took their stand at a little distance from their respective friends.

"Any chance of apology?" inquired Hillier—a keen-eyed, hawk-nosed *ci-devant militaire*.

"The devil a bit. Horridly savage."

"Then let us make haste," replied Hillier, with *sang-froid*.

"Apsley got —— drunk after you left this morning, and I've had only half an hour's sleep," continued Hillier, little suspecting that every word they were saying was overheard by Beauchamp, who, shrouded by the fog, was standing at but three or four yards' distance.

"Apsley drunk? Then 'twill give Beauchamp, poor devil, a bit of a chance."

"And this fog! How does he stand it? Cool?"

"As a cucumber. That is to say, he is *cold*—very *cold*—ha, ha! But I don't think he funks either. Told me he hated Apsley like hell, and we might put him up as we liked. What does *your* man say?"

"Oh, full of '*pooh-poohs!*' and calls it a mere bagatelle."

"Do mischief?—eh?"

"Oh—he's going to try for the arm or knee; for the fellow hurt his eye the other night."

"What—in this fog? My ——!"

"Oh, true! Forgot that—Ha, ha! —What's to be done?—Come, it's clearing off a bit."

"I say, Hillier," whispered Sir Edward, in a low tone—"suppose *mischief* should be done?"

"Suppose!—and *suppose*—it shouldn't? You'll never get your pistol done!—So, now!"

"Now, how far?"

"Oh, the usual distance! Step them out the baker's dozen. Give them every chance, for God favours them."

"But they won't see one another any more than the dead! 'Tis a complete farce—and the men themselves will grumble. How can they *mark?*"

"Why, here's a gate close by. I came past it. 'Tis white and large. Put them in a line with it."

"Why, Beauchamp will be hit, poor devil!"

"Never mind—deserves it, d—— fool!"

The distance duly stepped out, each stationed his man.

"I shall not stand against this gate, Streighton," said Beauchamp calmly. The baronet laughed, and replied, "Oh, you're right, my dear fellow! We'll put you, then, about three or four yards from it on one side." They were soon stationed, and pistols put into their hands. Both exclaimed loudly that they could not see their man. "So much the better. A chance shot!—We sha'n't put you any nearer," said Sir Edward—and the principals suddenly acquiesced.

"Now, take care to shoot at one another, not at *us*, in this cursed fog," said Sir Edward, so as to be heard by both. "We shall move off about twenty yards away to the right here. I will say—one! two! three!—and then do as you like."

"The Lord have mercy on you!" added Hillier.

"Come, quick! quick!—'Tis cursedly cold, and I must be at ——'s by ten," cried Apsley petulantly. The two seconds and the surgeon moved off. Beauchamp could not catch even a glimpse of his antagonist, to whom he was equally invisible. "Well," thought they, "if we miss, we can fire again!" In a few moments, Sir Edward's voice called out loudly—"One!—two!—THREE!"

Both pistol-fires flashed through the fog at once, and the seconds rushed up to their men.

"Beauchamp, where are you?"—"Apsley, where are you?"

"Here!" replied Beauchamp; but there was no answer from Apsley. He had been shot through the head; and in groping about, terror-struck, in search of him, they stumbled over his corpse. The surgeon was in an instant on his knees beside him, with his instruments out—but in vain. It was all over with Apsley. That heartless villain was gone to his account. Beauchamp's bullet, chance-shot as it was, had entered the right temple,

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passed through the brain, and lodged in the opposite temple. The only blood about him was a little which had trickled from the wound, down the cheek, on the shirt-collar.

"*Is he killed?*" groaned Beauchamp, bending over the body, and staring at it affrightedly; but before he could receive an answer from Sir Edward or Hillier, who, almost petrified, grasped each a hand of the dead body—he had swooned. The first words he heard, on recovering his senses, were—"Fly! fly! fly!" Not comprehending their import, he languidly opened his eyes, and saw people, some standing round him, and others bearing away the dead body. Again he relapsed into unconsciousness, from which he was aroused by some one grasping him rather roughly by the shoulder. His eyes glanced on the head of a constable's staff, and he heard the words —"You're in my custody, sir."

He started, and stared in the officer's face.

"There's a coach awaiting for you, sir, by the roadside, to take you to —— Office." Beauchamp offered no resistance. He whispered merely—"Does my mother know?"

How he rode, or with whom, he knew not, but he found himself, about nine o'clock, alighting at the door of the police-office, more dead than alive.

While Beauchamp had lain insensible on the ground, the fog had completely vanished; and Sir Edward and Hillier, finding it dangerous to remain, as passengers from the roadside could distinctly see the gloomy group, made off, leaving Beauchamp and the surgeon with the corpse of Apsley. Sir Edward flew to his own house, accompanied by Hillier. The latter hastily wrote a note to Apsley's brother, informing him of the event; and Sir Edward despatched his own valet, confidentially, to the valet of Beauchamp, communicating to him the dreadful situation of his master, and telling him to break it as he could to his friends. The valet instantly set off for the field of death, not however without apprising, by his terrified movements, his fellow-servants, that something dreadful had happened. He found a few people still standing on the fatal spot, from whom he learned that his master had been conveyed, a few minutes before, to the —— Street Office, whither he repaired as fast as a hackney-coach could carry him. When he arrived, an officer was endeavouring to rouse Mr Beauchamp from his stupor, by forcing on him a little brandy and water, in which he partly succeeded. Pale and breathless, the valet rushed through the crowd of officers and people about the door, and flung himself at his master's feet, wringing his hands, and crying —"Oh, master!—dear master!—what have you done! You'll kill your mother!" Even the myrmidons of justice seemed affected at the poor fellow's anguish; but his unhappy master only stared at him vacantly, without speaking. When he was conducted into the presence of the magistrate, he was obliged to be supported with a chair, for he was overcome, not only by the horrible situation to which he had brought himself, but his spirits and health were completely broken down, as well by his recent illness, as the wasting anxieties and agonies he had endured for months past. The brother of Apsley was present, raving like a madman; and he pressed the case vehemently against the prisoner. Bail, to a very great amount, was offered, but refused; and Beauchamp was eventually committed to Newgate, to take his trial at the next old Bailey Sessions. Sir Edward Streighton and Hillier surrendered in the course of the day, but were liberated on their own heavy recognisances, and two sureties, each in a thousand pounds, to appear and take their trial at the Old Bailey.

But what tongue can tell, what pen describe, the maddening horrors—the despair—of the mother and the betrothed bride? Not *mine*. Their sorrows shall be sacred for me.

——— For not to me belongs
To sound the mighty sorrows of thy breast,
But rather far off stand, with head and hands

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Hung down, in fearful sympathy. Thy
Ark of grief
Let me not touch, presumptuous.

To keep up, however, in some degree, the *continuity* of this melancholy narrative, I shall state merely, that I —who was called in to both mother and niece a few minutes after the news had smitten them, like the stroke of lightning, to the earth—wondered, was even confounded to find either of them survive it, or retain a glimpse of reason. The conduct of Ellen Beauchamp ennobled her, in my estimation, into something above humanity. She succeeded, at length, in overmastering her anguish and agitation, in order that she might minister to her afflicted aunt, in whose sorrow all consciousness or appreciation of her own seemed to have merged. For a whole week Mrs Beauchamp hovered, so to speak, about the open door of death, held back, apparently, only by a sweet spirit of sympathy and consolation—her niece! The first words she distinctly articulated, after many hours spent in delirious muttering, were—"I will see my son!—I will see my son!" It was not judged safe to trust her alone, without medical assistance, for at least a fortnight. Poor Pritchard, for several nights, slept outside her bedroom door!

The first twenty-four hours of Beauchamp's incarceration in Newgate were horrible. He who, on such slight temptation, had beggared himself, and squandered away in infamy the fortunes of his fathers—who had broken the hearts of his idolising mother—his betrothed wife—who had MURDERED A MAN—was NOW ALONE!—alone in the sullen gloom of a prison!

The transaction above detailed made much noise in London; and, disguised as it here is, in respect of names, dates, and places, there must be many who will recollect the *true facts*. There is ONE whose heart these pages will wither while he is reading!

Most of the journals, influenced by the vindictive misrepresentations of Apsley's brother, gave a most distorted version of the affair, and, presumptuously anticipating the decrees of justice, threw a gloomy hue over the prospects of the prisoner. He would certainly be convicted of *murder*, they said, executed, and disseeted! The judges were, or ought to be, resolved to put down duelling, and "never was there a more fitting opportunity for making a solemn example," &c. &c. One of the papers gave dark hints, that, on the day of trial, some extraordinary and inculpating disclosures would be made concerning the events which led to the duel.

Mrs Beauchamp made three attempts, during the third week of her son's imprisonment, to visit him, but, on each instance, fainted on being lifted into the carriage; and at length desisted, on my representing the danger which accompanied her attempts. Her niece also seemed more dead than alive when she attended her aunt. Pritchard, however—the faithful, attached Pritchard—often went to and fro between Newgate and the house where Mrs Beauchamp lodged, two or three times a-day, so that they were thus enabled to keep up a constant but sorrowful correspondence. Several members of the family had hurried up to London the instant they received intelligence of the disastrous circumstances above detailed; and it was well they did. Had it not been for their affectionate interference, the most lamentable consequences might have been anticipated to mother, niece, and son. I also, at Mrs Beauchamp's pressing instance, called several times on her son, and found him, on each visit, sinking into deeper and deeper despondency; yet he seemed hardly sensible of the wretched reality and extent of his misery. Many a time when I entered his room—which was the most comfortable the governor could supply him—I found him seated at the table, with his head buried in his arms; and I was sometimes obliged to shake him, in order that I might arouse him from his lethargy. Even then, he could seldom be drawn into conversation. When he spoke of his mother and cousin, it was with an apathy which affected me more than the most passionate lamentations.

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I brought him one day a couple of white winter roses from his mother and Ellen, telling him they were sent as pledges of love and hope. He snatched them out of my hands, kissed them, and buried them in his bosom, saying, "Lie you *there*, emblems of innocence, and blanch this black heart of mine, if you can!" I shall never forget the expression, nor the stern and gloomy manner in which this was uttered. I sat silent for some minutes.

"Doctor, doctor," said he hastily, placing his hands on his breast, "they are—I feel they are—thawing my frozen feelings!—they are softening my hard heart! O God! merciful God! I am becoming *human* again!" He looked at me with an eagerness and vivacity to which he had long been a stranger. He extended to me both his hands; I clasped them heartily, and he burst into tears. He wept loud and long.

"The light of eternal truth breaks in upon me! Oh, my God! hast thou, then, not forgotten me?" He fell down on his knees, and continued, "Why, what a wretch—what a monster have I been!" He started to his feet. "Ah, ha! I've been in the lion's den, and am plucked out of it!" I saw that his heart was overburdened, and his head not yet cleared. I said, therefore, little, and let him go on by fits and starts.

"Why, I've been all along in a dream! Henry Beauchamp!—in Newgate!—on a charge of *murder!*—Frightful!" He shuddered. "And my mother—my blessed mother!—where—how is she! Her heart bleeds—but no, no, no, it is not broken!—and *Ellen*, Ellen, Ellen!" After several short choking sobs, he burst again into a torrent of tears. I strove to soothe him; but "he would not be comforted." "Doctor, say nothing to console me!—Don't, don't, or I shall go mad! Let me *feel* all my guilt; let it crush me!"

My time being expired, I rose and bade him adieu. He was in a musing mood, as if he were striving, with painful effort, to propose some subject to his thoughts—to keep some object before his mind—but could not. I promised to call again, between then and the day of his trial, which was but a week off.

The excruciating anxiety endured by these unhappy ladies, Mrs Beauchamp and her niece, as the day of trial approached, when the life or death of one in whom both their souls were bound up must be decided on, defies description. I never saw it equalled. To look on the settled pallor, the hollow, haggard features, the quivering limbs of Mrs Beauchamp, was heartbreaking. She seemed like one in the palsy. All the soothing as well as strengthening medicines, which all my experience could suggest, were rendered unavailing to *such* a "mind diseased," to "raze" *such* "a written sorrow from the brain." Ellen, too, was wasting by her side to a mere shadow. She had written letter after letter to her cousin, and the only answer she received was—

"Cousin Ellen! How can you—how *dare* you—write to such a wretch as—Henry Beauchamp?"

These two lines almost broke the poor girl's heart. What was to become of her? Had she clung to her cousin through guilt and through blood, and did he now refuse to love her, or receive her proffered sympathy? She never wrote again to him till her aunt implored, nay, commanded her to write, for the purpose of inducing him to see them if they called. He refused. He was inflexible. Expostulation was useless. He turned out poor Pritchard, who had undertaken to plead their cause, with violence from his room. Whether he dreaded the effects of such an interview on the shattered nerves, the weakened frame of his mother and cousin, or feared that his own fortitude would be overpowered—or debarred himself of their sweet but sorrowful society, by way of *penance*, I know not; but he returned an unwavering denial to every such application. I think the last mentioned was the motive which actuated him; for I said to him, on one occasion, "Well, but Beauchamp, suppose your mother should *die* before you have seen her, and

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received her forgiveness?" He replied sternly, "Well, I shall have *deserved* it." I could thus account for his feelings, without referring them to sullenness or obstinacy. His heart bled at every pore under the unceasing lashings of remorse! On another occasion, he said to me, "It would *kill* my mother to see me here. She shall never die in a prison."

The day previous to his trial I called upon him, pursuant to my promise. The room was full of counsel and attorneys; and numerous papers were lying on the table, which a clerk was beginning to gather up into a bag when I entered. They had been holding their final consultation; and left their client more disturbed than I had seen him for some days. The eminent counsel who had been retained, spoke by no means encouragingly of the expected issue of the trial, and reiterated the determination to "do the very uttermost on his behalf." They repeated, also, that the prosecutor was following him up like a blood-hound; that he had got scent of some evidence against Beauchamp, in particular, which would *tell* terribly against him—and make out a case of "malice prepense."—And, as if matters had not been already sufficiently gloomy, the attorney had learned, only that afternoon, that the case was to be tried by one of the judges who, it was rumoured, was resolved to make an example of the first duellist he could convict!

"I shall, undoubtedly, be sacrificed, as my *fortune* has been already," said Beauchamp, with a little trepidation. "Everything seems against me. If I *should* be condemned to death—what is to become of my mother and Ellen?"

"I feel assured of your acquittal, Mr Beauchamp," said I, not knowing exactly *why*, if he had asked me.

"I am a little given to superstition, doctor," he replied—"and I feel a persuasion, an innate conviction, that the grand finishing stroke has yet to descend—my misery awaits its climax."

"Why, what can you mean, my dear sir? Nothing new has been elicited."

"Doctor," he replied gloomily—"I'll tell you something. I feel I OUGHT to die!"

"Why, Mr Beauchamp?" I asked with surprise.

"Ought not he to die who is *at heart* a murderer?" he inquired.

"Assuredly."

"Then I am such an one. I MEANT to kill Apsley. I prayed to God that I might. I would have shot breast to breast, but I would have killed him, and rid the earth of such a ruffian," said Beauchamp, rising with much excitement from his chair, and walking hurriedly to and fro. I shuddered to hear him make such an avowal, and continued silent. I felt my colour changed.

"Are you shocked, doctor?" he inquired, pausing abruptly, and looking me full in the face. "I repeat it," clenching his fist, "I would have perished eternally, to gratify my revenge. So would you," he continued, "if you had suffered as I have." With the last words he elevated his voice to a high key, and his eye glanced on me like lightning, as he passed and repassed me.

"How can we expect the mercy we will not show?" I inquired mildly.

"Don't mistake me, doctor," he resumed, without answering my last question. "It is not death I dread, disturbed as I appear, but only the *mode* of it. Death I covet, as a relief from life, which has grown hateful; but, great Heaven, to be HUNG like a dog!"

"Think of hereafter!" I exclaimed.

"Pshaw! I'm past thoughts of that. Why did not God keep me from the snares into which I have fallen?"

At that moment came a letter from Sir Edward Streighton. When he recognised the superscription, he threw it down on the table, exclaiming—"There! this is the first time I have heard from this accomplished scoundrel, since the day I killed Apsley." He opened it, a scowl of fury and contempt on his brow, and read the following flippant and unfeeling letter:—

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"Dear Brother in the bonds of blood!

"My right trusty and well-beloved counsellor, and thine — Hillier, and thy unworthy E. S., intend duly to take our stand beside thee, at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, in the dock of the Old Bailey, as per recognisances. Be not thou cast down, O my soul; but throw thou fear unto the dogs! There's never a jury in England will convict us, even though, as I hear, that bloody-minded old —— is to try us! We've got a good fellow (on reasonable terms, considering) to swear he happened to be present, and that we put you up at forty paces! and that he heard you tender an apology to Apsley! The sweet convenient rogue!!! What think you of that, dear Beau? Yours ever—but not on the gallows.—Edw. Streighton.

"P.S.—I wish Apsley, by the way, poor devil! had paid me a trifling hundred or two he owed me, before going home. But he went in a hurry, 'tis true. Catch me ever putting up another man before asking him if he has any debts unprovided for!"

"There, there, doctor!" exclaimed Beauchamp, flinging the letter on the floor, and stamping on it—"ought not I to go out of the world, for allowing such a fellow as this to lead me the dance of ruin?"

I shook my head.

"Oh, did you but know the secret history of the last six months," he continued bitterly—"the surpassing folly—the black ingratitude—the villanies of all kinds with which it was stained—you would blush to sit in the same room with me! Would it not be so?"

"Come, come, Mr Beauchamp, you are raving!" I replied, giving him my hand, while the tears half-blinded me; for he looked the picture of contrition and hopelessness.

"Well, then," he continued, eyeing me steadfastly, "I may do what I have often thought of. You have a kind considerate heart, and I will trust you. By way of the heaviest penance I could think of—but, alas! how unavailing!—I have employed the last week in writing my short but wretched history. Read it—and curse, as you go on, my folly, my madness, my villany! I've often laid down my pen, and wept aloud, while writing it; and yet the confession has eased my heart. One thing, I think, you will see plainly—that, all along, I have been the victim of some deep diabolical conspiracy. Those two vile fellows who will stand beside me to-morrow in the dock, like evil spirits—and the monster I have killed—have been the main agents throughout. I'm sure something will, ere long, come to light, and show you I am speaking the truth. Return it me," he continued, taking a packet from his table drawer, sealed with black, "in the event of my acquittal, that I may burn it; but, if I am to die, do what you will with it. Even if the world know of it, it cannot hurt me in the grave, and it may save some from *Hazard* and *Rouge et Noir!* Horrible sounds!"

I received the packet in silence, promising him to act as he wished.

"How will my mother, how will Ellen, get over to-morrow? Heaven have them in its holy keeping! My own heart quails at to-morrow!—I must breathe a polluted atmosphere; I must stand on the precise spot which has been occupied by none but the vilest of my species; I shall have every eye in court fixed upon me—some with horror, others detestation—and some *pity*, which is worse than either. I must stand between two whom I can never look on as other than devils incarnate! My every gesture and motion, every turn of my face, will be noted down and published all over the kingdom, with severe, possibly insulting comments. Good God! how am I to bear it all?" * *

"Have you prepared your defence, Mr Beauchamp?" I inquired. He pointed languidly to several sheets of foolscap, full of scorings out, and said, with a sigh, "I'm afraid it is labour lost. I can say little or nothing. I shall not *lie*, even for my life! I have yet to finish it."

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"Don't, then, let me keep you from it! May God bless you, my dear sir, and send you an acquittal to-morrow! What shall I say to your mother—to Miss Beauchamp, if I see them to-night?"

His eyes glistened with tears, he trembled, shook his head, and whispered, "What CAN be said to them?"

I shook him fervently by the hand. As I was quitting the door, he beckoned me back.

"Doctor," he whispered, in a shuddering tone, "there is to be an *execution* to-morrow! Five men will be hanged within ten yards of me! I shall hear them in the night putting up the —gallows!"

The memorable morning—for such it was, even to me—at length dawned. The whole day was rainy, cold, and foggy, as if the elements had combined to depress hearts already prostrate! After swallowing a hasty breakfast, I set off for the Old Bailey, calling for a few minutes on Mrs Beauchamp, as I had promised her. Poor old lady! She had not slept half an hour during the whole night; and when I entered the room she was lying in bed, with her hands clasped together, and her eyes closed, listening to one of the church prayers, which her niece was reading her. I sat down in silence; and when the low tremulous voice of Miss Beauchamp had ceased, I shook her cold hand, and took my seat by her aunt. I pushed the curtain aside, that I might see her distinctly. Her features looked ghastly. What savage work grief had wrought there!

"I don't think I shall live through this dreadful day," said she; "I feel everything dissolving within me!—I am deadly sick every moment; my heart flutters as if it were in expiring agonies; and my limbs have little in them more than a corpse! Ellen, too, my sweet love! *she* is as bad; and yet she conquers it, and attends me like an angel!"

"Be of good heart, my dear madam," said I; "matters are by no means desperate. This evening, I'll stake my life for it, you shall have your son in your arms!"

"Ha!" quivered the old lady, clapping her hands, while a faint hysteric laugh broke from her colourless lips.

"Well, I must leave you—for I am going to hear the opening of the trial; I promised your son as much last night."

"How was he?" faintly inquired Miss Beauchamp, who was sitting beside the fire, her face buried in her hands, and her elbows resting on her knees. The anguished eyes of her aunt also asked me the question, though her lips spoke not. I assured them that he was not in worse spirits than I had seen him, and that I left him preparing his defence.

"The Lord God of his fathers bless him, and deliver him!" moaned Mrs Beauchamp. As, however, time passed, and I wished to look in on one or two patients in my way, I began to think of leaving, though I scarcely knew how. I enjoined them to keep constantly by Mrs Beauchamp a glass of brandy and water, with half a teaspoonful of laudanum in it, that she or her niece might drink of it whenever they felt a sudden faintness come over them. For further security, I had also stationed, for the day, in her bedroom, a young medical friend, who might pay her constant attention. Arrangements had been made, I found, with the attorney, to report the progress of the trial every hour by four regular runners.

Shaking both the ladies affectionately by the hand, I set off. After seeing the patients I spoke of, I hurried on to the Old Bailey. It was striking ten by St Sepulchre's clock when I reached that gloomy street. The rain was pouring down in drenching showers. I passed by the gallows, which they were taking down, and on which five men had been executed only two hours before. Horrid sight! The whole of the street along the sessions' house was covered with straw, thoroughly soaked with wet; and my carriage wheels rolled along it noiselessly. I felt my colour leaving me, and my heart beating fast, as I descended, and entered the area before the court-house, which was occupied with many anxious groups, conversing together, heedless of the rain, and endeavouring to get

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admittance into the court. The street entrance was crowded; and it was such a silent, gloomy crowd, as I never before saw! I found the trial had commenced—so I made my way instantly to the counsel's benches. The court was crowded to suffocation; and, among the spectators, I recognised several of the nobility. Three prisoners stood in the dock—all of gentlemanly appearance; and the strong startling light thrown on them from the mirror over-head, gave their anxious faces a ghastly hue. How vividly is that group, even at this distance of time, before my eyes! On the right-hand side stood Sir Edward Streighton—dressed in military style, with a black stock, and his blue frock-coat, with velvet collar, buttoned up close to his neck. Both his hands rested on his walking-stick; and his head, bent a little aside, was attentively directed towards the counsel for the crown, who was stating the case to the jury. Hillier leaned against the left-hand side of the dock, his arms folded over his breast, and his stern features, clouded with anxiety, but evincing no agitation, were gathered into a frown, as he listened to the strong terms in which his conduct was being described by the counsel. Between these stood poor Beauchamp, with fixed and most sorrowful countenance. He was dressed in black, with a full black stock, in the centre of which glistened a dazzling speck of diamond. Both his hands leaned upon the dock, on which stood a glass of spring water; and his face was turned full towards the judge. There was an air of melancholy composure and resignation about his wasted features; and he looked dreadfully thin and fallen away. His appearance evidently excited deep and respectful sympathy. How my heart ached to look at him, when my thoughts reverted for an instant to his mother and cousin! There was, however, one other object of the gloomy picture which arrested my attention, and has remained with me ever since. Just beneath the witness-box, there was a savage face fixed upon the counsel, gloating upon his exaggerated violence of tone and manner. It was Mr Frederick Apsley, the relentless prosecutor. I never saw such an impersonation of malignity. On his knees lay his fists, clenched, and quivering with irrepressible fury; and the glances he occasionally cast towards the prisoners were absolutely fiendish.

The counsel for the prosecution distorted and aggravated every occurrence on the fatal night of the quarrel. Hillier and Streighton, as he went on, exchanged confounded looks, and muttered between their teeth; but Beauchamp seemed unmoved—even when the counsel seriously asserted he should be in a condition to prove, that Beauchamp came to the house of the deceased with the avowed intention of provoking him into a duel; that he had been attempting foul play throughout the evening; and that the cause of his inveteracy against the deceased, was the deceased's having won considerably.

"Did this quarrel originate, then, in a gaming-house?" inquired the judge sternly.

"Why—yes, my lord—it did, undoubtedly."

"Pray, are the parties *professed* gamblers?"

The counsel hesitated. "I do not exactly know what your lordship means by *professed* gamblers, my lord?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the judge significantly, "go on—go on, sir." I felt shocked at the virulence manifested by the counsel; and I could not help suspecting him of uttering the grossest falsehoods, when I saw all three of the prisoners involuntarily turn towards one another, and lift up their hands with amazement. As his address seemed likely to continue much longer, profound as was the interest I felt in the proceedings, I was compelled to leave. I stood up for that purpose, and to take a last look at Beauchamp—when his eye suddenly fell upon me. He started—his lips moved—he looked at me anxiously—gave me a hurried bow, and resumed the attentive attitude in which he had been standing.

I hurried away to see my patients, several of whom were in most critical circumstances. Having gone through

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most on my list, and being in the neighbourhood, I stepped in to see how Mrs Beauchamp was going on. When I entered her bedroom, after gently tapping at the door, I heard a hurried feeble voice exclaim—"There! there! who is that?" It was Mrs Beauchamp, who endeavoured, but in vain, to raise herself up in bed, while her eyes stared at me with an expression of wild alarm, which abated a little on seeing who I was. She had mistaken me, I found, for the hourly messenger. I sat down beside her. Several of her female relatives were in the room—a pallid group—having arrived soon after I had left.

"Well, my dear madam, and how are you now?" I inquired, taking the aged sufferer's hand in mine.

"I may be better, doctor—but cannot be worse. Nature tells me the hour is come!"

"I am happy to see you so well—so affectionately attended in these trying circumstances," said I, looking around the room. She made me no reply—but moaned—"Oh! Henry, Henry, Henry!—I would to God you had never been born!—Why are you thus breaking the heart that always loved you so fondly!" She shook her head, and the tears trembled through her closed eyelids. Miss Beauchamp, dressed in black, sat at the foot of the bed, speechless, her head leaning against the bed-post, and her pale face directed towards her aunt.

"How are *you*, my dear Miss Beauchamp?" inquired I. She made me no answer, but continued looking at her aunt.

"My sweet love!" said her mother, drawing her chair to her, and proffering her a little wine and water. "Doctor —— is speaking to you. He asks you how you are?" Miss Beauchamp looked at me, and pressed her white hand upon her heart, without speaking. Her mother looked at me significantly, as if she begged I would not ask her daughter any more questions, for it was evident she could not bear them. I saw several slips of paper lying on a vacant chair beside the bed. They were the hourly billets from the Old Bailey. One of them was—"12 *o'clock, O. B.*—Not quite so encouraging. Our counsel can't make much impression in cross-examination. Judge seems rather turning against prisoner."

"1 *o'clock, O. B.*—Nothing particular since last note. Prisoner very calm and firm."

"2 *o'clock, O. B.*—Still going on as in last."

"3 *o'clock, O. B.*—Mr Beauchamp just read his defence. Made favourable impression on the court. Many in tears. Acknowledged himself ruined by play. General impression, prisoner victim of conspiracy."

Such were the hourly annunciations of the progress of the trial, forwarded by the attorney, in whose handwriting each of them was. The palsying suspense in which the intervals between the receipt of each was passed, and the trepidation with which they were opened and read—no one daring scarcely to touch them but Mr M——, the medical attendant—cannot be described. Mr M—— informed me that Mrs Beauchamp had been wandering deliriously, more or less, all day, and that the slightest noise in the street, like hurrying footsteps, spread dismay through the room, and nearly drove the two principal sufferers frantic. Miss Beauchamp, I found, had been twice in terrible hysterics, but, with marvellous self-possession, calmly left the room when she felt them coming on, and retired to the farthest part of the house. While Mr M—— and I were conversing in a low whisper near the fireplace, a heavy but muffled knock at the street door announced the arrival of another express from the Old Bailey. Mrs Beauchamp trembled violently, and the very bed quivered under her, as she saw the billet delivered into my hands. I opened it, and read aloud—

"4 *o'clock, O. B.*—Judge summing up—sorry to say, a little unfavourably to prisoner. Don't *think*, however, prisoner will be *capitally* convicted." Within this slip was another, which was from Beauchamp himself, and addressed—

"Sweet loves!—Courage! The crisis

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approaches. I am not in despair. God is merciful! May he bless you for ever and ever, my mother, my Ellen!—H. B."

The gloomy tenor of the last billet—for we could not conceal them from either, as they insisted on *seeing* them after we had read them—excited Mrs and Miss Beauchamp almost to frenzy. It was heart-rending to see them both shaking in every muscle, and uttering the most piteous moans. I resolved not to quit them till the event was known one way or another, and dismissed Mr M——, begging him to return home with the carriage, and inform my wife that I should not dine at home. I then begged that some refreshment might be brought in, ostensibly for my dinner, but really to give me an opportunity of forcing a little nourishment on my wretched patients. My meal, however, was scanty and solitary; for I could scarcely eat myself, and could not induce any one else to touch food.

"This must be a day of *fasting!*" sighed Mrs Beauchamp; and I desisted from the attempt.

"Mrs Beauchamp," inquired her sister-in-law, "would you like to hear a chapter in the Bible read to you?"

"Y—ye—yes!" she replied eagerly; "Let it be the parable of the *prodigal son;* and perhaps Dr —— will read it to us?"

What an affecting selection!—Thinking it might serve to occupy their minds for a short time, I commenced reading it, but not very steadily or firmly. The relieving tears gushed forth freely from Mrs Beauchamp, and every one in the room, as I went on with that most touching, beautiful, and appropriate parable. When I had concluded, and amidst a pause of silent expectation, another billet was brought:—

"5 *o'clock, O. B.*—Judge still summing up with great pains. Symptoms of leaning towards the prisoner."

Another agitating hour elapsed—how, I scarcely know; and a breathless messenger brought a sixth billet:—

"6 *o'clock, O. B.*—Jury retired to consider verdict—been absent half an hour. Rumoured in court that two hold out against the rest—not known on which side."

After the reading of this torturing note, which Mrs Beauchamp did not ask to see, she lifted up her shaking hands to heaven, and seemed lost in an agony of prayer. After a few minutes spent in this way, she gasped, almost inaudibly—"Oh! doctor, read once more the parable you have read, beginning at the twentieth verse." I took the Bible in my hands, and tremulously read—

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion"—(a short, bitter, hysteric laugh broke from Mrs Beauchamp)—"and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

* * * "And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat and be merry;

"For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found: and they began"——

The death-like silence in which my trembling voice was listened to, was broken by the sound of a slight bustle in the street beneath, and the noise of some approaching vehicle. We scarcely breathed. The sound increased. Miss Beauchamp slowly dropped on her knees beside the bed, and buried her ashy face in the clothes. The noise outside increased; voices were heard; and at length a short faint "huzza!" was audible.

"There!—I told you so! He is free!—My son is ACQUITTED!" exclaimed Mrs Beauchamp, sitting in an instant upright in bed, stretching her arms upwards, and clapping her hands in ecstasy. Her features were lit up with a glorious smile. She pushed back her dishevelled grey hair, and sat straining her eye and ear, and stretching forward her hands, as if to enjoin silence.

Then was heard the sound of footsteps rapidly ascending the stairs; the door was knocked at, and, before I could reach it, for the purpose of preventing any sudden surprise, in rushed the old steward, frantic with joy, waving his hat over his head.

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"Not Guilty! Not Guilty!—Not Guilty, my lady!" he gasped, all in a breath, in defiance of my cautionary movements. "He's coming! He's coming! He's coming, my lady!" Miss Beauchamp sank in an instant on the floor with a faint scream, and was carried out of the room in a swoon.

Mrs Beauchamp again clapped her hands. Her son rushed into the room, flung himself at her feet, and threw his arms around her. For several moments, he locked her in his embraces, kissing her with convulsive fondness. "My mother! My own mother!—Your son!" he gasped; but she heard him not. She had expired in his arms.

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To proceed with my narrative, after recounting such a lamentable catastrophe, is like conducting a spectator to the death-strewn plain, after the day of battle! All in the once happy family of Beauchamp was thenceforth sorrow, sickness, broken-heartedness, and death. As for the unhappy Beauchamp, he was released from the horrors of a prison, "only to turn his pale face to the wall," on a lingering, languishing bed of sickness, which he could not quit, even to follow the poor remains of his mother to their final resting-place in ———shire. He was not only confined to his bed, but wholly unconscious of the time of the burial, for a fierce nervous fever kept him in a state of continual delirium. Another physician and myself were in constant attendance on him. Poor Miss Beauchamp also was ill, and, if possible, in a worse plight than her cousin. The reader cannot be surprised that such long and intense sufferings should have shattered her vital energies—should have sown the seeds of *consumption* in her constitution. Her pale, emaciated, shadowy figure, is now before me!—After continuing under my care for several weeks, her mother carried her home into ———shire, in a most precarious state, hoping the usual beneficial results expected from a return to native air. Poor girl! she gave me a little pearl ring, as a keepsake, the day she left; and intrusted to me a rich diamond ring, to give to her cousin Henry. "It is too large now, for *my* fingers," said she with a sigh, as she dropped it into my hand from her wasted finger! "Tell him," said she, "as soon as you consider it safe, that my love is his—my whole heart! And though we may never meet on this side the grave, let him wear it to *think* of me, and hope for happiness hereafter!" These were amongst the last words that sweet young woman ever spoke to me.

* * * *

As the reader, possibly, may think he has been long enough detained among these sorrowful scenes, I shall draw them now to a close, and omit much of what I had set down for publication.

Mr Beauchamp did not once rise from his bed during two months, the greater part of which time was passed in a state of stupor. At other periods he was delirious, and raved dreadfully about scenes with which the manuscript he committed to me in prison had made me long and painfully familiar. He loaded himself with the heaviest curses, for the misery he had occasioned to his mother and Ellen. He had taken it into his head that the latter was also dead, and that he had attended her funeral. He was not convinced to the contrary, till I judged it safe to allow him to open a letter she had addressed to him, under cover to me. She told him she thought she was "getting strong again;" and that, if he would still accept her heart and hand, in the event of his recovery, they were his unchangeably. Nothing contributed so much to Beauchamp's recovery as this letter. With what fond transports did he receive the ring Ellen had intrusted to my keeping!

His old steward, Pritchard, after accompanying his venerated lady's remains into the country, returned immediately to town, and scarcely ever after left his master's bedside. His officious affection rendered the office of the valet a comparative sine-

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cure. Many were the piques and heart-burnings between these two zealous and emulous servants of an unfortunate master, on account of the one usurping the other's duty!

One of the earliest services that old Pritchard rendered his master, as soon as I warranted him in so doing, was to point out who had been the "serpent in his path"—the origin—the deliberate, diabolical designer of his ruin—in the person of his tutor. The shock of this discovery rendered Beauchamp speechless for the remainder of the day. Strange and wise are the ways of Providence! How does the reader imagine the disgraceful disclosures were brought about? Sir Edward Streighton, who had got into his hands the title-deeds of one of the estates, out of which he and his scoundrel companions had swindled Beauchamp, had been hardy enough —*quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat*—to venture into a court of law, to prosecute his claim! In spite of threatened disclosures, he pressed on to trial; when such a series of flagrant iniquities was developed, unexpectedly to *all* parties, as compelled Sir Edward, who was in court *incognito*, to slip away, and, without even venturing home, embark for the Continent, and from thence to that common-sewer of England—America.* His papers were all seized, under a judge's order, by Mr Beauchamp's agents; and among them was found the letter addressed to him by Eccles, coolly commending his unsuspicious pupil to destruction!

Under Beauchamp's order, his steward made a copy of the letter, and enclosed it, with the following lines, to the tutor, who had since contrived to gain a vicarage!

"To the Reverend Peter Eccles,
vicar of ——.

"SIR,—A letter, of which the following is a copy, has been discovered, in your handwriting, among the papers of Sir Edward Streighton; and the same post which brings you this, encloses your own original letter to Sir Edward, with all necessary explanations, to the bishop of your diocese.

"The monstrous perfidy it discloses, will be forthwith made as public as the journals of the day can make it.

"THOMAS PRITCHARD,
*Agent for Mr Beauchamp.*"

What results attended the application to the bishop, and whether or not the concluding threat was carried into effect, *I have reasons for concealing.* There *are*, who do not need information on those points.

The first time that I saw Mr Beauchamp down stairs after his long, painful, and dangerous illness, was on an evening in the July following. He was sitting in his easy-chair, which was drawn close to a bow-window, commanding an uninterrupted view of the setting sun. It was piteous to see how loosely his black clothes hung about him. If you touched any of his limbs, they felt like those of a skeleton clothed with the vestments of the living. His long thin fingers seemed attenuated and blanched to a more than feminine delicacy of size and hue. His face was shrunk and sallow, and his forehead bore the searings of a "scorching woe." His hair, naturally black as jet, was now of a sad iron-grey colour; and his eyes were sunk, but full of vivid, though melancholy expression. The air of noble frankness, spirit, and cheerfulness, which had heretofore graced his countenance, was fled for ever. In short, to use the quaint expression of a sterling old English writer, "care had scratched out the comeliness of his visage." He appeared to have lost all interest in life, even though Ellen was alive, and they were engaged to be married within a few months! In his right hand was a copy of *Bacon's Essays;* and, on the little finger of his left, I observed

* His companion in villany, who, in this narrative, is called *Hillier*, brazened out the affair with unequalled effrontery, and continued in England till within the last very few years; when, rank with roguery, he tumbled into the grave, and so cheated justice. The hoary villain might be seen nightly at —— Street, with huge green glasses—*now* up to his knees in cards—and *then* endeavouring, with palsied hand, to shake the dice with which he had ruined so many.

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the rich ring given him by his cousin. As he sat, I thought him a fit subject for a painter! Old Pritchard, dressed also in plain mourning, sat at a table busily engaged with account books and piles of papers, and seemed to be consulting his master on the affairs of his estate, when I entered.

"I hope, doctor, you'll excuse Mr Pritchard continuing in the room with us. He's in the midst of important business," he continued, seeing the old man preparing to leave the room; "he is my *friend* now, as well as steward; and the oldest, I may say *only* friend, I have left!" I entreated him not to mention the subject, and the faithful old steward bowed, and resumed his seat.

"Well," said Mr Beauchamp, after answering the usual inquiries respecting his health, "I am not, after all, absolutely *ruined* in point of fortune. Pritchard has just been telling me that I have more than four hundred a-year left"——

"Sir, sir, you may as well call it a good £500 a-year," said Pritchard eagerly, taking off his spectacles. "I am but £20 a-year short of the mark, and I'll *manage that*, by hook or by crook, and you—see if I don't!" Beauchamp smiled faintly. "You see, doctor, Pritchard is determined to put the best face upon matters."

"Well, Mr Beauchamp," I replied, "taking it even at the lower sum mentioned, I am sincerely rejoiced to find you so comfortably provided for." While I was speaking, the tears rose in his eyes—trembled there for a few moments—and then, spite of all attempts to prevent them, overflowed.

"What distresses you?" I inquired, taking his slender fingers in mine. When he had a little recovered himself, he replied, with emotion, "Am I not comparatively a beggar? Does it suit to hear that Henry Beauchamp is a *beggar*? Alas! I have nothing now but misery—hopeless misery! Where shall I go, what shall I do, to find peace? Wherever I go, I shall carry a broken heart, and a consciousness that I have deserved it!——I—I, the murderer of two"——

"*Two*, Mr Beauchamp? What can you mean? The voice of justice has solemnly acquitted you of murdering the miserable Apsley—and who the *other* is"——

"My mother!—my poor, fond, doating mother! I have killed *her*, as certainly as I slew the guilty wretch that ruined me! My ingratitude pierced her *heart*, as my bullet his *head!* That it is which distracts—which maddens me! The rest I might have borne—even the anguish I have occasioned my sweet forgiving Ellen, and the profligate destruction of the fortunes of my house!" I saw he was in one of the frequent fits of despondency to which he was latterly subject, and thought it best not to interrupt the strain of his bitter retrospections. I therefore listened to his self-accusations in silence.

"Surely you have ground for comfort and consolation in the unalterable, the increasing attachment of your cousin?" said I, after a melancholy pause.

"Ah, my God! it is that which drives the nail deeper! I cannot, cannot bear it! How shall I DARE to wed her? To bring her to an impoverished house—the house of a *ruined gamester*—when she has a right to rule in the halls of my fathers? To hold out to her the arms of a MURDERER!" He ceased abruptly—trembled, clasped his hands together, and seemed lost in a painful reverie.

"God has, after all, intermingled some sweets in the cup of sorrows you have drained: why cast *them* scornfully away, and dwell on the state of the bitter?"

"Because my head is disordered; my appetites are corrupted. I cannot now *taste* happiness. I know it not; the relish is gone for ever!"

* * * *

"In what part of the country do you propose residing?" I inquired.

"I can never be received in English society again—and I will not remain here in a perpetual pillory—to be pointed at!—I shall quit England for ever"——

"You *sha'n't*, though!" exclaimed the steward bursting into tears, and

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rising from his chair, no longer able to control himself—"You sha'n't go!" he continued, walking hurriedly to and fro, snapping his fingers. "You sha'n't—no, you sha'n't, Master Beauchamp—though I say it that shouldn't! —You shall trample on my old bones first."

"Come, come, kind old man!—Give me your hand!" exclaimed Mr Beauchamp, affected by this lively show of feeling on the part of his old and tried servant—"Come, I won't go, then—I won't!"

"Ah!—point at you—*point at you!* did you say, sir? I'll be —— if I won't do for any one that points at you, what you did for that rogue Aps"——

"Hush, Pritchard!" said his master, rising from his chair, and looking shudderingly at him.

The sun was fast withdrawing, and a portion of its huge blood-red disc was already dipped beneath the horizon. Is there a more touching or awful object in nature?—We who were gazing at it, felt that there was not. All before us was calmness and repose. Beauchamp's kindling eye assured me that his soul sympathised with the scene.

"Doctor, doctor!" he exclaimed suddenly, "what has come to me? Is there a devil mocking me? Or is it an angel whispering that I shall yet be happy? May I listen—*may* I listen to it?"—He paused. His excitement increased. "Oh! yes, yes! I feel intimately—I know I am reserved for happier days! God smileth on me, and my soul is once more warmed and enlightened!"—An air of joy diffused itself over his features. I never before saw the gulf between despair and hope passed with such lightning speed!—Was it returning delirium only?

"How can he enjoy happiness who has never tasted misery?" he continued, uninterrupted by me. "And may not he most relish peace, who has been longest tossed in trouble!—Why—why have I been desponding?—Sweet, precious Ellen! I will write to you! We shall soon meet; we shall even be happy together!—Pritchard," he exclaimed, turning abruptly to the listening steward—"what say you? Will you be my *major-domo*—eh? Will you be with us our managing man in the country, once again?"

"Ay, Master Beauchamp," replied Pritchard, crying like a child, "as long as these old eyes, and hands, and head, can serve you, they are yours! I'll be anything you'd like to make me!"

"There's a bargain, then, between you and me!—You see, doctor, Ellen will not cast me off; and old Pritchard will cling to me; why should I throw away happiness?"

"Certainly — certainly — there is much happiness before you"——

"The thought is transporting, that I shall soon leave the scenes of guilt and dissipation for ever, and breathe the fresh and balmy atmosphere of virtue once again! How I long for the time! Mother, will you watch over your prodigal son?" How little he thought of the affecting recollections he had called forth in my mind, by mentioning—*the prodigal son.*

I left him about nine o'clock, recommending him to retire to rest, and not expose himself to the cool of the evening. I felt excited myself by the tone of our conversation, which I suspected, however, had on his part verged far into occasional flightiness. *I* had not such sanguine hopes for him, as he entertained for himself—I suspected that his constitution, however it might rally for a time from its present prostration, had received a shock before which it *must* erewhile fall!

About five o'clock the next morning, I and all my family were alarmed by one of the most violent and continued ringings and thunderings at the door I ever heard. On looking out of my bedroom window, I saw Mr Beauchamp's valet below, wringing his hands, and stamping about the steps like one distracted.

Full of fearful apprehension, I dressed myself in an instant, and came down stairs.

"In the name of God, what is the matter?" I inquired, seeing the man pale as ashes.

"Oh! my master!—come—come" —he gasped, and could get out no

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more. We both ran at a top speed to Mr Beauchamp's lodgings. Even at that early hour, there was an agitated group before the door. I rushed upstairs, and soon learned all. About a quarter of an hour before, the family were disturbed by hearing Mr Beauchamp's Newfoundland dog, which always slept at his master's bedroom door, howling, whining, and scratching against it. The valet and some one else came to see what was the matter. They found the dog trembling violently, his eyes fixed on the floor; and, on looking down, they saw blood flowing from under the door. The valet threw himself, half frantic, against the door, and burst it open; he rushed in, and saw all! Poor Beauchamp, with his razor grasped in his right hand, was lying on the floor lifeless!

I never now hear of a young man —especially of fortune—frequenting the GAMING-TABLE, but I think, with a sigh, of Henry Beauchamp.

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I CANNOT resist the opportunity of appending to this narrative the following mournful testimony to its fidelity, which appeared in the *Morning Herald* newspaper of the 19th October 1831:—

SIR—There is an awful narrative in the current number of BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, of the fate of a gamester, which, in addition to the writer's assurances, bears intrinsic evidence of *truth*. Independent even of this, I can believe it all, highly coloured as some may consider it—for I am a *ruined gamester!*

Yes, Sir, I am here, lying, as it were, *rotting* in jail, because I have, like a fool, spent over the gaming-table all my patrimony! *Twenty-five thousand pounds* are all gone at *Rouge et Noir* and Hazard! All gone! I could not help thinking that the writer of that terrible account had *me* in his eye, or has been told something of my history!

When I shall be released from my horrid prison I know not; but even when I am, life will have lost all its relish, for I shall be a *beggar!*

If I had a hundred pounds to spare, I would spend it all in reprinting the "Gambler" from BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, and distributing it among the frequenters of C——'s and F——'s, and other hells! I am sure its overwhelming truth and power would shock *some* into pausing on the brink of ruin!

I address *you*, because your paper has been one of the most determined and successful enemies to gaming.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

A RUINED GAMESTER.

—— *Prison, Oct.* 17.

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# CHAPTER XXIV.

## THE THUNDER-STRUCK.—THE BOXER.*

In the summer of 18—, London was visited by one of the most tremendous thunder-storms that have been known in this climate. Its character and effects—some of which latter form the subject of this chapter—will make me remember it to the latest hour of my life.

There was something portentous—a still, surcharged air—about the whole of Tuesday, the 10th of July 18—, as though nature were trembling and cowering beneath a common shock. In the exquisite language of one of our old dramatists,† there seemed

——— A calm
Before a tempest, when the gentle air
Lays her soft ear close to the earth, to listen
For that she fears steals on to ravish her.

From about eleven o'clock at noon, the sky wore a lurid threatening aspect, that shot awe into the beholder; suggesting to startled fancy the notion, that within the dim confines of the "labouring air," mischief was working to the world.

The heat was intolerable, keeping almost everybody within doors. The dogs, and other cattle in the streets, stood everywhere panting and loath to move. There was no small excitement, or rather agitation, diffused throughout the country, especially London; for, strange to say (and many must recollect the circumstance), it had been for some time confidently foretold by certain enthusiasts, religious as well as philosophic, that the earth was to be destroyed that very day; in short, that the tremendous Judgment was at hand! Though not myself over credulous, or given to superstitious fears, I own that on coupling these fearful predictions with the unusual, and almost preternatural aspect of the day, I more than once experienced sudden qualms of apprehension as I rode along on my daily rounds. I did not so much communicate alarm to the various circles I entered, as catch it from them. Then, again, I would occasionally pass a silent group of passengers clustering round a street-preacher, who, true to his vocation, "redeeming the time," seemed by his gestures, and the disturbed countenances around him, to be foretelling all that was frightful. The tone of excitement which pervaded my feelings, was further heighttened by a conversation on the prevailing topic which I had in the course of the morning with the distinguished poet and scholar, Mr ——. With what fearful force did he suggest possibilities; what vivid, startling colouring did he throw over them! It was, indeed, a topic congenial to his gloomy imagination. He talked to me, in short, till my disturbed fancy began to realise the wildest chimeras.

"Great God, Dr ——!" said he, laying his hand suddenly on my arm, his great black eyes gleaming with mysterious awe—"Think, only think! What if, at the moment we are talking together, a comet, whose track

* This is a narrative—for obvious reasons somewhat varied in circumstances—of a lamentable occurrence in the author's family. About fourteen years ago, a very beautiful girl, eighteen years old, terrified at a violent thunder-storm, rushed into a cellar to escape, as she thought, from the danger, and was found there in the state described in the text. She died four days afterwards.

† Marlow.



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the peering eye of science has never traced—whose very existence is known to none but God—is winging its fiery way towards our earth, swift as the lightning, and with force inevitable! Is it at this instant dashing to fragments some mighty orb that obstructed its progress, and then passing on towards us, disturbing system after system in its way?—How—when will the frightful crash be felt? Is its heat now blighting our atmosphere?—Will combustion first commence, or shall we be at once split asunder into innumerable fragments, and sent drifting through infinite space?—Whither—whither shall we fly? what must become of our species?—Is the Scriptural JUDGMENT then coming?—Oh, doctor, what if all these things *are really at hand?*"

Was this imaginative raving calculated to calm one's feelings?—By the time I reached home, late in the afternoon, I felt in a fever of excitement. I found an air of apprehension throughout the whole house. My wife, children, and a young lady, a visitor, were all together in the parlour, looking out for me, through the window, anxiously—and with paler faces than they perhaps were aware of. The visitor just alluded to, by the way, was a Miss Agnes P——, a girl of about twenty-one, the daughter of an old friend and patient of mine. Her mother, a widow (with no other child than this), resided in a village about fifty miles from town—from which she was expected, in a few days' time, to take her daughter back again into the country. Miss P—— was a very charming young woman. There was a softness of expression about her delicate features, that in my opinion constitutes the highest style of feminine loveliness. Her dark, pensive, searching eyes, spoke a soul full of feeling. The tones of her voice, mellow and various, and her whole carriage and demeanour, were in accordance with the expression of her features. In person she was about the average height, and perfectly well moulded and proportioned; and there was a Hebe-like ease and grace about all her gestures. She excelled in most feminine accomplishments; but her favourite objects were music and romance. A more imaginative creature was surely never known. It required all the fond and anxious surveillance of her friends to prevent her carrying her tastes to excess, and becoming, in a manner, unfitted for the "dull commerce of a duller earth!"

No sooner had this young lady made her appearance in my house, and given token of something like a prolonged stay, than I became the most popular man in the circle of my acquaintance. Such assiduous calls to inquire after *my* health, and that of my family!—Such a multitude of men—young ones, to boot—and so embarrassed with a consciousness of the poorness of the pretence that drew them to my house! Such matronly inquiries from mothers and elderly female relatives, into the nature and extent of "sweet Miss P——'s expectations!" During a former stay at my house, about six months before the period of which I am writing, Miss P—— surrendered her affections—(to the delighted surprise of all her friends and relatives)—to the quietest, and perhaps worthiest of her claimants—a young man, then preparing for orders at Oxford. Never, sure, was there a greater contrast between the tastes of a pledged couple; she all feeling, romance, enthusiasm; he serene, thoughtful, and matter-of-fact. It was most amusing to witness their occasional collisions on subjects which developed their respective tastes and qualities; and interesting to note that the effect was invariably to raise the one in the other's estimation—as if each prized most the qualities of the other. Young N—— had spent two days in London—the greater portion of them, I need hardly say, at my house—about a week before the period of which I am writing; and he and his fair mistress had disputed rather keenly on the topic of general discussion—the predicted event of the 10th of July. If she did not repose implicit faith in the prophecy, her belief had, somehow or another, acquired a most disturbing strength. He laboured hard

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to disabuse her of her awful apprehensions—and she as hard to overcome his obstinate incredulity. Each was a little too eager about the matter; and, for the first time since they had known each other, they parted with a *little* coldness—yes, although he was to set off the next morning for Oxford! In short, scarcely anything was talked about by Agnes but the coming 10th of July; and if she did not anticipate the actual destruction of the globe, and the final judgment of mankind, she at least looked forward to some event, mysterious and tremendous. The eloquent enthusiastic creature almost brought over my placid, little, matter-of-fact wife to her way of thinking!

To return from this long digression—which, however, will be presently found to have been not unnecessary. After staying a few minutes in the parlour, I retired to my library, for the purpose, among other things, of making those entries in my Diary, from which these "Passages" are taken—but the pen lay useless in my hand. With my chin resting on the palm of my left hand, I sat at my desk lost in a reverie; my eyes fixed on the tree which grew in the yard and overshadowed my windows. How still—how motionless was every leaf! What sultry — oppressive — *unusual* repose! How it would have cheered me to hear the faintest "sough" of wind—to see the breeze sweep freshening through the leaves, rustling and stirring them into life! I opened my window, untied my neckerchief, and loosened my shirt-collar — for I felt suffocated with the heat. I heard at length a faint pattering sound among the leaves of the tree—and presently there fell on the window-frame three or four large ominous drops of rain. After gazing upwards for a moment or two on the gloomy aspect of the sky—I once more settled down to writing; and was dipping my pen into the inkstand, when there blazed about me a flash of lightning, with such a ghastly, blinding splendour, as defies all description. It was like what one might conceive to be a glimpse of hell—and yet not a *glimpse* merely—for it continued, I think, six or seven seconds. It was followed, at scarce an instant's interval, with a crash of thunder as if the world had been smitten out of its sphere, and was rending asunder!—I hope these expressions will not be considered hyperbolical. No one, I am sure, who recollects the occurrence I am describing, will require the appeal!—May *I* never see or hear the like again! I leaped from my chair with consternation; and could think of nothing at the moment, but closing my eyes, and shutting out from my ears the stunning sound of the thunder.* For a moment I stood literally stupefied. On recovering myself, my first impulse was to spring to the door, and rush down stairs in search of my wife and children. I heard, on my way, the sound of shrieking proceed from the parlour in which I had left them. In a moment I had my wife folded in my arms, and my children clinging with screams round my knees. My wife had fainted. While I was endeavouring to restore her,

* The following fine description of a storm at sea, is to be found in Mr James Montgomery's "*Pelican Island.*" I shall, I hope, be excused for transcribing it, as I believe it is not very generally known:—

"Dreary and hollow moans foretold a gale;
Nor long the issue tarried; then the wind,
Unprison'd, blew its trumpet loud and shrill;
Out flash'd the lightnings gloriously; the rain
Came down like music, and the full-toned thunder
Roll'd in grand harmony throughout high heaven:
Till ocean, breaking from his black supineness,
Drown'd in his own stupendous uproar all
The voices of the storm beside; meanwhile
A war of mountains raged upon his surface;
Mountains each other swallowing, and again
New Alps and Andes, from unfathom'd valleys
Upstarting, join'd the battle; like those sons
Of earth—giants, rebounding as new-born
From every fall on their unwearied mother.
I glow'd with all the rapture of the strife:
Beneath was one wild whirl of foaming surges;
Above the array of lightnings, like the swords
Of cherubim, wide brandish'd to repel
Aggression from heaven's gates; their flaming strokes
Quench'd momentarily in the vast abyss."

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there came a second flash of lightning, equally terrible with the first—and a second explosion of thunder, loud as one could imagine the discharge of a thousand parks of artillery, directly over-head. The windows—in fact, the whole house quivered with the shock. The noise helped to recover my wife from her swoon.

"Kneel down! Love! Husband!"—she gasped, endeavouring to drop upon her knees—"Kneel down! Pray—pray for us! *It is at hand!*" After shouting several times pretty loudly, and pulling the bell repeatedly and violently, one of the servants made her appearance—but evidently terrified and bewildered. She and her mistress, however, recovered themselves in a few minutes, roused by the cries of the children. "Wait a moment, love," said I, "and I will bring you a little sal-volatile!" I stepped into the back room, where I generally kept a few phials of drugs—and poured out what I wanted. The thought then for the first time struck me, that I had not seen Miss P—— in the parlour I had just quitted. *Where* was she? What would *she* say to all this?—God bless me, where is she?—I thought, with increasing trepidation.

"Edward—Edward," I exclaimed, to a servant who happened to pass the door of the room where I was standing; "where's Miss P——?"

"Miss P——, sir!—Why—I don't—oh, yes!" he replied, suddenly recollecting himself, "about five minutes ago I saw her run very quickly up-stairs, and haven't seen her since, sir."

"What!" I exclaimed with increasing trepidation, "was it about the time that the first flash of lightning came?" "Yes, it was, sir!"—"Take this in to your mistress, and say I'll be with her immediately," said I, giving him what I had mixed. I rushed up-stairs, calling out as I went, "Agnes! Agnes! where are you?" I received no answer. At length I reached the floor where her bedroom lay. The door was closed, but not shut.

"Agnes! Where are you?" I inquired, very agitatedly, at the same time knocking at her door. I received no answer.

"Agnes! Agnes! For God's sake speak!—Speak, or I shall come into your room!" No reply was made; and I thrust open the door. Heavens! Can I describe what I saw?

Within less than a yard of me stood the most fearful figure my eyes have ever beheld. It was Agnes!—She was in the attitude of stepping to the door, with both arms extended. Her hair was partially dishevelled. Her face seemed whiter than the white dress she wore. Her lips were of a livid hue. Her eyes, full of awful expression, were fixed with a petrifying stare on me. Oh, language fails me—utterly!—Those eyes have seldom since been absent from me when alone! I strove to speak—but could not utter a sound. My lips seemed rigid as those I looked at. The horrors of nightmare seemed upon me. My eyes at length closed; my head seemed turning round—and for a moment or two I lost all consciousness. I revived. *There* was the frightful thing still before me—nay, close to me! Though I looked at her, I never once thought of Agnes P——. It was the tremendous appearance—the ineffable terror gleaming from her eyes, that thus overcame me. I protest I cannot conceive anything more dreadful! Miss P—— continued standing perfectly motionless; and while I was gazing at her in the manner I have been describing, a peal of thunder roused me to my self-possession. I stepped towards her, took hold of her hand, exclaiming, "Agnes—Agnes!" and carried her to the bed, where I laid her down. It required some little force to press down her arms; and I drew the eyelids over her staring eyes mechanically. While in the act of doing so, a flash of lightning flickered luridly over her—but her eye neither quivered nor blinked. She seemed to have been suddenly deprived of all sense and motion: in fact, nothing but her pulse—if pulse it should be called—and faint breathing, showed

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that she lived. My eye wandered over her whole figure, dreading to meet some scorching trace of lightning—but there was nothing of the kind. What had happened to her? Was she frightened—to death? I spoke to her; I called her by her name, loudly; I shook her, rather violently: I might have acted it all to a statue!—I rang the chamber bell with almost frantic violence: and presently my wife and a female servant made their appearance in the room; but I was far more embarrassed than assisted by their presence. "Is she killed?" murmured the former, as she staggered towards the bed, and then clung convulsively to me—"Has the lightning struck her?"

I was compelled to disengage myself from her grasp, and hurry her into the adjoining room—whither I called a servant to attend her; and then returned to my hapless patient. But what was I to do? Medical man as I was, I never had seen a patient in such circumstances, and felt as ignorant on the subject as agitated. It was not epilepsy—it was not apoplexy—a swoon—nor any known species of hysteria. The most remarkable feature of her case, and what enabled me to ascertain the nature of her disease, was this; that if I happened accidentally to alter the position of her limbs, they retained, for a short time, their new position. If, for instance, I moved her arm—it remained for a while in the situation in which I had last placed it, and gradually resumed its former one. If I raised her into an upright posture, she continued sitting so without the support of pillows, or other assistance, as exactly as if she had heard me express a wish to that effect, and assented to it; but—the horrid vacancy of her aspect! If I elevated one eyelid for a moment, to examine the state of the eye, it was some time in closing, unless I drew it over myself. All these circumstances—which terrified the servant who stood shaking at my elbow, and muttering, "She's possessed! she's possessed!—Satan has her!"—convinced me at length that the unfortunate girl was seized with CATALEPSY; that rare mysterious affection, so fearfully blending the conditions of life and death—presenting—so to speak—life in the aspect of death, and death in that of life! I felt no doubt that extreme terror, operating suddenly on a nervous system most highly excited, and a vivid, active fancy, had produced the effects I saw. Doubtless the first terrible outbreak of the thunder-storm—especially the fierce splendour of that first flash of lightning which so alarmed myself—apparently corroborating and realising all her awful apprehensions of the predicted event, overpowered her at once, and flung her into the fearful situation in which I found her—that of one ARRESTED in her terror-struck flight towards the door of her chamber. But again—the thought struck me—had she received any direct injury from the lightning? Had it blinded her? It might be so—for I could make no impression on the pupils of the eyes. Nothing could startle them into action. They seemed a little more dilated than usual, and fixed.

I confess that, besides the other agitating circumstances of the moment, this extraordinary, this unprecedented case, too much distracted my self-possession to enable me promptly to deal with it. I had heard and read of, but never before seen such a case. No time, however, was to be lost. I determined to resort at once to strong anti-spasmodic treatment. I bled her from the arm freely, applied blisters behind the ears, immersed her feet, which, together with her hands, were cold as those of a statue, in hot water, and endeavoured to force into her mouth a little opium and ether. Whilst the servants were busied about her, undressing her, and carrying my directions into effect, I stepped for a moment into the adjoining room, where I found my wife just recovering from a violent fit of hysterics. Her loud laughter, though so near me, I had not once heard, so absorbed was I with the mournful case of Miss P——. After continuing with her till she recovered sufficiently to accompany me

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down stairs, I returned to Miss P——'s bedroom. She continued exactly in the condition in which I had left her. Though the water was hot enough almost to parboil her tender feet, it produced no sensible effect on the circulation, or the state of the skin; and finding a strong determination of blood towards the regions of the head and neck, I determined to have her cupped between the shoulders. I went down stairs to drop a line to the apothecary, requesting him to come immediately with his cupping instruments. As I was delivering the note into the hands of a servant, a man rushed up to the open door where I was standing, and, breathless with haste, begged my instant attendance on a patient close by, who had just met with a severe accident. Relying on the immediate arrival of Mr ——, the apothecary, I put on my hat and great-coat, took my umbrella, and followed the man who had summoned me out. It rained in torrents; for the storm, after about twenty minutes' intermission, burst forth again with unabated violence. The thunder and lightning—peal upon peal—blaze upon blaze, were really terrific!

### THE BOXER.

The patient who thus abruptly, and, under circumstances, inopportunely, required my services, proved to be one Bill ——, a notorious boxer, who, in returning that evening from a great prize-fight, had been thrown out of his gig, the horse having been frightened by the lightning, and the rider, who was much the worse for liquor, had his ankle dreadfully dislocated. He had been taken up by some passengers, and conveyed with great difficulty to his own residence, a public-house, not three minutes' walk from where I lived. The moment I entered the tap-room, which I had to pass on my way to the staircase, I heard his groans, or rather howls, over-head. The excitement of intoxication, added to the agonies occasioned by his accident, had driven him, I was told, nearly mad. He was uttering the most revolting execrations as I entered his room. He damned himself, his ill luck (for it seemed he had lost considerable sums on the fight), the combatants, the horse that threw him, the thunder and lightning—everything, in short, and everybody about him. The sound of the thunder was sublime melody to me, and the more welcome, because it drowned the blasphemous bellowing of the monster I was visiting. Yes; there lay the burly boxer, stretched upon the bed, with none of his dress removed except the boot, which had been cut from the limb that was injured—his new blue coat, with glaring yellow buttons, and drab knee-breeches, soiled with the street mud into which he had been precipitated—his huge limbs, writhing in restless agony over the bed—his fists clenched, and his flat, iron-featured face swollen and distorted with pain and fury.

"But, my good woman," said I, pausing at the door, addressing myself to the boxer's wife, who, wringing her hands, had conducted me up-stairs, "I assure you I am not the person you should have sent to. It's a surgeon's, not a physician's case; I fear I can't do much for him—quite out of my way"——

"Oh, for God's sake—for the love of God, don't say so!" gasped the poor creature with affrighted emphasis—"Oh, do *something* for him, or he'll drive us all out of our senses—he'll be killing us!"

"Do something!" roared my patient, who had overheard the last words of his wife, turning his bloated face towards me—"*do* something, indeed? ay, and be —— to you! Here, here look ye, doctor—look ye *here!*" he continued, pointing to the wounded foot, which, all crushed and displaced, and the stocking soaked with blood, presented a shocking appearance—"look here, indeed!—ah! that —— horse! that —— horse!" his teeth gnashed, and his right hand was lifted up, clenched, with fury—"If I don't break every bone in his —— body, as soon as ever I can stir this cursed leg again!"

I felt for a moment as though I had

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entered the very pit and presence of Satan, for the lightning was gleaming over his ruffianly figure incessantly, and the thunder rolling close overhead while he was speaking.

"Hush! hush! you'll drive the doctor away! For pity's sake hold your tongue, or Doctor —— won't come into the room to you!" gasped his wife, dropping on her knees beside him.

"Ha, ha! Let him go! Only let him stir a step, and lame as I am, —— me if I don't jump out of bed, and teach him civility! *Here*, you doctor, as you call yourself! What's to be done?" Really I was too much shocked, at the moment, to know. I was half inclined to leave the room immediately, and had a fair plea for doing so in the *surgical* nature of the case; but the agony of the fellow's wife induced me to check my outraged feelings, and stay. After directing a person to be sent off, in my name, for the nearest surgeon, I addressed myself to my task, and proceeded to remove the stocking. His whole body quivered with the anguish it occasioned; and I saw such fury gathering in his features, that I began to dread lest he might rise up in a sudden frenzy, and strike me.

"Oh! oh! oh! Curse your clumsy hands! You don't know no more nor a child," he groaned, "what you're about. Leave it—leave it alone! Give over with ye! Doctor, ——, I say, be off!"

"Mercy, mercy, doctor!" sobbed his wife in a whisper, fearing from my momentary pause that I was going to take her husband at his word—"Don't go away!—Oh, go on—go on! It *must* be done, you know! Never mind what he says! He's only a little the worse for liquor now—and—and then the *pain!* Go on, doctor! He'll thank you the more for it to-morrow!"

"Wife! here!" shouted her husband. The woman instantly stepped up to him. He stretched out his Herculean arm, and grasped her by the shoulder.

"So, you ——! I'm drunk, am I? I'm *drunk*, eh—you lying ——!" he exclaimed, and jerked her violently away, right across the room, to the door, where the poor creature fell down, but presently rose, crying bitterly.

"Get away! Get off—get down stairs—if you don't want me to serve you the same again! Say I'm drunk, you beast?" With frantic gestures she obeyed, rushed down stairs, and I was left alone with her husband. I was disposed to follow her abruptly; but the positive dread of my life (for he might leap out of the bed and kill me with a blow) kept me to my task. My flesh crept with disgust at touching his! I examined the wound, which undoubtedly must have given him torture enough to drive him mad, and bathed it in warm water; resolved to pay no attention to his abuse, and quit the instant that the surgeon, who had been sent for, made his appearance. At length he came. I breathed more freely, resigned the case into his hands, and was going to take up my hat, when he begged me to continue in the room, with such an earnest apprehensive look, that I reluctantly remained. I saw he dreaded as much being left alone with his patient as I! It need hardly be said that every step that was taken in dressing the wound, was attended with the vilest execrations of the patient. Such a foul-mouthed ruffian I never encountered anywhere. It seemed as though he was possessed of a devil. What a contrast to the sweet speechless sufferer whom I had left at home, and to whom my heart yearned to return!

The storm still continued raging. The rain had comparatively ceased, but the thunder and lightning made their appearance with fearful frequency and fierceness. I drew down the blind of the window, observing to the surgeon that the lightning seemed to startle our patient.

"Put it up again! Put up that blind again, I say!" he cried impatiently. "D'ye think *I'm* afeard of the lightning, like my —— horse to-day? Put it up again—or I'll get out and do it myself!" I did as he wished. Reproof or expostulation was useless. "Ha!" he exclaimed, in a low tone of fury, rubbing his hands together—in a manner bathing them in the fiery

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stream, as a flash of lightning gleamed ruddily over him. "*There* it is! Curse it—just the sort of flash that frightened my horse—d—— it!"—and the impious wretch shook his fist, and "grinned horribly a ghastly smile."

"Be silent, sir! Be silent! or we will both leave you instantly. Your behaviour is impious! it is frightful to witness! Forbear—lest the vengeance of God descend upon you!"

"Come, come—none o' your —— methodism *here!* Go on with your business! Stick to your trade," interrupted the Boxer.

"Does not *that* rebuke your blasphemies?" I inquired, suddenly shading my eyes from the vivid stream of lightning that burst into the room, while the thunder rattled overhead—evidently in most dreadful proximity. When I removed my hands from my eyes, and opened them, the first object that they fell upon was the figure of the Boxer, sitting upright in bed, with both hands stretched out, just as those of Elymas the sorcerer in the picture of Raphael—his face the colour of a corpse—and his eyes, almost starting out of their sockets, directed with a horrid stare towards the window. His lips moved not—nor did he utter a sound. It was clear what had occurred. The wrathful fire of heaven, that had glanced harmlessly around us, had blinded the blasphemer. Yes—the sight of his eyes had perished. While we were gazing at him in silent awe, he fell back in bed speechless, and clasped his hands over his breast, seemingly in an attitude of despair. But for that motion, we should have thought him dead. Shocked beyond expression, Mr —— paused in his operations. I examined the eyes of the patient. The pupils were both dilated to their utmost extent, and immovable. I asked him many questions, but he answered not a word. Occasionally, however, a groan of horror, remorse, agony (or all combined), would burst from his pent bosom; and this was the only evidence he gave of consciousness. He moved over on his right side—his "pale face turned to the wall"—and, unclasping his hands, pressed the forefinger of each with convulsive force upon the eyes. Mr —— proceeded with his task. What a contrast between the present and past behaviour of our patient! Do what we would—put him to never such great pain—he neither uttered a syllable, nor expressed any symptoms of passion, as before. There was, however, no necessity for my continuing any longer; so I left the case in the hands of Mr ——, who undertook to acquaint Mrs —— with the frightful accident that had happened to her husband. What two scenes had I witnessed that evening!

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I hurried home full of agitation at the spectacle I had just quitted, and melancholy apprehensions concerning the one to which I was returning. On reaching my lovely patient's room, I found, alas! no sensible effects produced by the very active means which had been adopted. She lay in bed, the aspect of her features apparently the same as when I last saw her. Her eyes were closed—her cheeks very pale, and mouth rather open, as if she were on the point of speaking. The hair hung in a little disorder on each side of her face, having escaped from beneath her cap. My wife sat beside her, grasping her right hand—weeping and almost stupefied; and the servant that was in the room when I entered, seemed so bewildered as to be worse than useless. As it was now getting dark, I ordered candles. I took one of them in my hand, opened her eyelids, and passed and repassed the candle several times before her eyes, but it produced no apparent effect. Neither the eyelids blinked, nor the pupils contracted. I then took out my penknife, and made a thrust with the open blade, as though I intended to plunge it into her right eye; it seemed as if I might have buried the blade in the socket, for the shock or resistance called forth by the attempt. I took her hand in mine—having for a moment displaced my wife—and found it damp and cold; but when I suddenly left it suspended, it continued

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so for a few moments, and only gradually resumed its former situation. I pressed the back of the blade of my penknife upon the flesh at the root of the nail (as every one knows, a very tender part), but she evinced not the slightest sensation of pain. I shouted suddenly and loudly in her ears, but with similar ill success. I felt at an extremity. Completely baffled at all points—discouraged and agitated beyond expression—I left Miss P—— in the care of a nurse, whom I had sent for to attend upon her, at the instance of my wife, and hastened to my study to see if my books could throw any light upon the nature of this, to me, new and inscrutable disorder. After hunting about for some time, and finding but little to the purpose, I prepared for bed, determining in the morning to send off for Miss P——'s mother, and Mr N—— from Oxford, and also to call upon my eminent friend Dr D——, and hear what his superior skill and experience might be able to suggest. In passing Miss P——'s room, I stepped in to take my farewell for the evening. "Beautiful, unfortunate creature!" thought I, as I stood gazing mournfully on her, with my candle in my hand, leaning against the bed-post. "What mystery is upon thee? What awful change has come over thee?—the gloom of the grave and the light of life—both lying upon thee at once! Is thy mind palsied as thy body? How long is this strange state to last? How long art thou doomed to linger thus on the confines of both worlds, so that those in either, who love thee, may not claim thee? Heaven guide our thoughts to discover a remedy for thy fearful disorder!" I could not bear to look upon her any longer; and after kissing her lips, hurried up to bed, charging the nurse to summon me the moment that any change whatever was perceptible in Miss P——. I dare say, I shall be easily believed when I apprise the reader of the troubled night that followed such a troubled day. The thunder-storm itself, coupled with the predictions of the day, and apart from its attendant incidents that have been mentioned, was calculated to leave an awful and permanent impression on one's mind. "If I were to live a century, I could not forget it," said a distinguished writer, in a letter to me. "The thunder and lightning were more appalling than I ever recollect witnessing, even in the West Indies—that region of storms and hurricanes. The air had been long surcharged with electricity; and I predicted several days beforehand that we should have a storm of very unusual violence. But when with this we couple the strange prophecy that gained credit with a prodigious number of those one would have expected to be above such things—neither more nor less than that the world was to come to an end on that very day, and the judgment of mankind to follow; I say, the coincidence of the events was not a little singular, and calculated to inspire common folk with wonder and fear. I dare say, if one could but find them out, that there were instances of people frightened out of their wits on the occasion. I own to you candidly that I, for one, felt a little squeamish, and had not a little difficulty in bolstering up my courage with Virgil's *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*," &c.

I did not so much sleep as doze interruptedly for the first three or four hours after getting into bed. I, as well as my alarmed Emily, would start up occasionally, and sit listening, under the apprehension that we heard a shriek, or some other such sound, proceed from Miss P——'s room. The image of the blinded Boxer flitted in fearful forms about me, and my ears seemed to ring with his curses.—It must have been, I should think, between two and three o'clock, when I dreamed that I leaped out of bed, under an impulse sudden as irresistible—slipped on my dressing-gown, and hurried down stairs to the back drawing-room. On opening the door, I found the room lit up with funeral tapers, and the apparel of a dead-room spread about. At the further end lay a coffin on trestles, covered with a long sheet, with the figure of an old woman

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sitting beside it, with long streaming white hair, and her eyes, bright as the lightning, directed towards me with a fiendish stare of exultation. Suddenly she rose up—pulled off the sheet that had covered the coffin—pushed aside the lid—plucked out the body of Miss P——, dashed it on the floor, and trampled upon it with apparent triumph! This horrid dream awoke me, and haunted my waking thoughts. May I never pass such a dismal night again!

I rose from my bed in the morning feverish and unrefreshed; and in a few minutes' time hurried to Miss P——'s room. The mustard applications to the soles of the feet, together with the blisters behind the ears, had produced the usual local effects, without affecting the complaint. Both her pulse and breathing continued calm. The only change perceptible in the colour of her countenance was a slight pallor about the upper part of the cheeks, and I fancied there was an expression about her mouth approaching to a smile. She had, I found, continued, throughout the night, motionless and silent as a corpse. With a profound sigh I took my seat beside her, and examined the eyes narrowly, but perceived no change in them. What was to be done? How was she to be roused from this fearful—if not fatal lethargy?

While I was gazing intently on her features, I fancied that I perceived a slight muscular twitching about the nostrils. I stepped hastily down stairs (just as a drowning man, they say, catches at a straw) and returned with a phial of the strongest solution of ammonia,* which I applied freely with a feather to the interior of the nostrils. This attempt, also, was unsuccessful as the former ones. I cannot describe the feelings with which I witnessed these repeated failures to stimulate her torpid sensibilities into action; and not knowing what to say or do, I returned to dress, with feelings of unutterable despondency. While dressing, it struck me that a blister might be applied with success along the whole course of the spine. The more I thought of this expedient, the more feasible it appeared;—it would be such a direct and powerful appeal to the nervous system—in all probability the very seat and source of the disorder! I ordered one to be sent for instantly—and myself applied it, before I went down to breakfast. As soon as I had despatched the few morning patients that called, I wrote imperatively to Mr N—— at Oxford, and to Miss P——'s mother, entreating them by all the love they bore Agnes to come to her instantly. I then set out for Dr D——'s, whom I found just starting on his daily visits. I communicated the whole case to him. He listened with interest to my statement, and told me he had once a similar case in his own practice, which, alas! terminated fatally, in spite of the most anxious and combined efforts of the *élite* of the faculty in London. He approved of the course I had adopted—most especially the blister on the spine; and earnestly recommended me to resort to galvanism—if Miss P—— should not be relieved from the fit before the evening—when he promised to call, and assist in carrying into effect what he recommended.

"Is it that beautiful girl I saw in your pew last Sunday, at church?" he inquired suddenly.

"The same—the same!"—I replied with a sigh.

Dr D—— continued silent for a moment or two.

"Poor creature!" he exclaimed with an air of deep concern, "one so beautiful! Do you know I thought I now and then perceived a very remarkable expression in her eye, especially while that fine voluntary was playing. Is she an enthusiast about music?"

"Passionately—devotedly"——

"We'll try it!" he replied briskly, with a confident air—"We'll try it! First, let us disturb the nervous torpor with a slight shock of galvanism, and then try the effect of your organ."*

* Liquid smelling-salts.

* I had at home—being myself a lover, though not a scientific one, of music—a very fine organ.

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I listened to the suggestion with interest, but was not quite so sanguine in my expectations as my friend appeared to be.

In the whole range of disorders that affect the human frame, there is perhaps not one so mysterious, so incapable of management, as that which afflicted the truly unfortunate young lady whose case I am narrating. It has given rise to infinite speculation, and is admitted, I believe, on all hands to be—if I may so speak—a nosological anomaly. Van Swieten vividly and picturesquely enough compares it to that condition of the body, which, according to ancient fiction, was produced in the beholder by the appalling sight of Medusa's head—

"Saxifici Medusæ vultus."

The medical writers of antiquity have left evidence of the existence of this disease in their day—but given the most obscure and unsatisfactory descriptions of it, confounding it, in many instances, with other disorders—apoplexy, epilepsy, and swooning. Celsus, according to Van Swieten, describes such patients as these in question under the term "*attoniti*," which is a translation of the title I have prefixed to this paper: while, in our own day, the celebrated Dr Cullen classes it as a species of apoplexy, at the same time stating that he had never seen a genuine instance of catalepsy. He had always found, he says, those cases, which were reported such, to be feigned ones. More modern science, however, distinctly recognises the disease as one peculiar and independent; and is borne out by numerous unquestionable cases of catalepsy, recorded by some of the most eminent members of the profession. Dr Jebb, in particular, in the appendix to his "Select Cases of Paralysis of the Lower Extremities," relates a remarkable and affecting instance of a cataleptic patient. As it is not likely that general readers have met with this interesting case, I shall here transcribe it. The young lady who was the subject of the disorder, was seized with the fit when Dr Jebb was announced on his first visit.

"She was employed in netting, and was passing the needle through the mesh; in which position she immediately became rigid, exhibiting, in a very pleasing form, a figure of death-like sleep, beyond the power of art to imitate, or the imagination to conceive. Her forehead was serene, her features perfectly composed. The paleness of her colour—her breathing being also scarcely perceptible at a distance—operated in rendering the similitude to marble more exact and striking. The position of the fingers, hands, and arms was altered with difficulty, but preserved every form of flexure they acquired. Nor were the muscles of the neck exempted from this law; her head maintaining every situation in which the hand could place it, as firmly as her limbs.

"Upon gently raising the eyelids, they immediately closed with a degree of spasm.* The iris contracted upon the approach of a candle, as in a state of vigilance. The eyeball itself was slightly agitated with a tremulous motion, not discernible when the eyelid had descended. About half an hour after my arrival, the rigidity of her limbs and statue-like appearance being yet unaltered, she sung three plaintive songs in a tone of voice so elegantly expressive, and with such affecting modulation, as evidently pointed out how much the most powerful passion of the mind was concerned in the production of her disorder—as, indeed, her history confirmed. In a few minutes afterwards she sighed deeply, and the spasm in her limbs was immediately relaxed. She complained that she could not open her eyes, her hands grew cold, a general tremor followed; but in a few seconds, recovering entirely her recollection and powers of motion, she entered into a detail of her symptoms, and the history of her complaint. After she had discoursed for some time with apparent calmness, the universal spasm suddenly returned. The features now assumed a different form, denoting a mind strongly im-

* This was not the case with Miss P——. I repeatedly remarked the perfect mobility of her eyelids.

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pressed with anxiety and apprehension. At times she uttered short and vehement exclamations, in a piercing tone of voice, expressive of the passions that agitated her mind; her hands being strongly locked in each other, and all her muscles, those subservient to speech excepted, being affected with the same rigidity as before."

But the most extraordinary case on record is one* given by Dr Petetin, a physician of Lyons, in which "*the senses were transferred to the pit of the stomach, and the ends of the fingers and toes*—i. e. the patients, in a state of insensibility to all external impressions upon the proper organs of sense, were nevertheless capable of hearing, *seeing*, smelling, and tasting whatever was approached to the pit of the stomach, or the ends of the fingers and toes! The patients are said to have answered questions proposed to the pit of the stomach—to have told the hour by a watch placed there—to have tasted food, and smelt the fragrance of apricots, touching the part," &c. &c. It may be interesting to add, that an eminent physician, who went to see the patient, incredulous of what he had heard, returned perfectly convinced of its truth. I have also read somewhere of a Spanish monk, who was so terrified by a sudden sight which he encountered in the Asturias mountains, that, when several of his holy brethren, whom he had preceded a mile or two, came up, they found him stretched upon the ground in the fearful condition of a cataleptic patient. They carried him back immediately to their monastery, and he was believed dead. He suddenly revived, however, in the midst of his funeral obsequies, to the consternation of all around him. When he had perfectly recovered the use of his faculties, he related some absurd matters which he pretended to have seen in a vision during his comatose state. The disorder in question, however, generally makes its appearance in the female sex, and seems to be in many, if not in most instances, a remote member of the family of hysterical affections.—To return, however.

On returning home from my daily round, in which my dejected air was remarked by all the patients I had visited, I found no alteration whatever in Miss P——. The nurse had failed in forcing even arrow-root down her mouth, and, finding it was not swallowed, was compelled to desist, for fear of choking her. We were, therefore, obliged to resort to other means of conveying support to her exhausted frame. The blister on the spine, from which I had expected so much, and the renewed sinapisms to the feet, had failed to make any impression! Thus was every successive attempt an utter failure! The disorder continued absolutely inaccessible to the approaches of medicine. The baffled attendants could but look at her, and lament. Good God! was Agnes to continue in this dreadful condition till her energies sunk in death? What would become of her lover?—of her mother? These considerations greatly disturbed my peace of mind. I could neither think, read, eat, nor remain anywhere but in the chamber, where, alas! my presence was so unavailing!

Dr D—— made his appearance soon after dinner; and we proceeded at once to the room where our patient lay. Though a little paler than before, her features were placid as those of the chiselled marble. Notwithstanding all she had suffered, and the fearful situation in which she lay at that moment, she still looked very beautiful. Her cap was off, and her rich auburn hair lay negligently on each side of her, upon the pillow. Her forehead was white as alabaster. She lay with her head turned a little on one side, and her two small white hands were clasped together over her bosom. This was the nurse's arrangement: for "poor dear young lady," she said, "I couldn't bear to see her laid straight along, with her arms close beside her like a corpse, so I tried to make her look as much asleep as possible!" The impression of beauty, however, conveyed by her symmetrical and tranquil fea-

* A second similar case, well authenticated, occurred not long afterwards, at the same place.—They are attributed by Dr P. to the influence of animal electricity.

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tures, was disturbed as soon as, lifting up the eyelids, we saw the fixed stare of the eyes. They were not glassy, or corpse-like, but bright as those of life, with a little of the dreadful expression of epilepsy. We raised her in bed, and she, as before, sat upright, but with a blank, absent aspect, that was lamentable and unnatural. Her arms, when lifted and left suspended, did not fall, but *sunk* down again gradually. We returned her gently to her recumbent posture, and determined at once to try the effect of galvanism upon her. My machine was soon brought into the room; and when we had duly arranged matters, we directed the nurse to quit the chamber for a short time, as the effect of galvanism is generally found too startling to be witnessed by a female spectator. I wish I had not myself seen it in the case of Miss P——! Her colour went and came—her eyelids and mouth started open—and she stared wildly about her, with the aspect of one starting out of bed in a fright. I thought at one moment that the horrid spell was broken, for she sat up suddenly, leaned forwards towards me, and her mouth opened as though she were about to speak!

"Agnes! Agnes! dear Agnes! Speak, speak! but a word! Say you live!" I exclaimed, rushing forwards. Alas! she heard me—she saw me—not, but fell back in bed in her former state! When the galvanic shock was conveyed to her limbs, it produced the usual effects—dreadful to behold in all cases—but agonising to me in the case of Miss P——. The last subject on which I had seen the effects of galvanism,* previous to the present instance, was the body of an executed malefactor; and the associations revived on the present occasion were almost too painful to bear. I begged my friend to desist, for I saw the attempt was hopeless, and I would not allow her tender frame to be agitated to no purpose. My mind misgave me for ever making the attempt. What, thought I, if we have fatally disturbed the nervous system, and prostrated the small remains of strength she had left? While I was torturing myself with such fears as these, Dr —— laid down the rod, with a melancholy air, exclaiming, "Well! what *is* to be done now? I cannot tell you how sanguine I was about the success of this experiment! * * Do you know whether she ever had a fit of epilepsy?" he inquired.

"No—not that I am aware of. I never heard of it, if she had."

"Had she generally a horror of thunder and lightning?"

"Oh—quite the contrary! she felt a sort of ecstasy on such occasions, and has written some beautiful verses during their continuance. *Such* seemed rather her hour of inspiration than otherwise!"

"Do you think the lightning itself has affected her?—Do you think her sight is destroyed?"

"I have no means of knowing whether the immobility of the pupils arises from blindness, or is only one of the temporary effects of catalepsy."

"Then she believed the prophecy, you think, of the world's destruction on Tuesday?"

"No—I don't think she exactly *believed* it; but I am sure that day

* A word about that case, by the way, in passing. The spectacle was truly horrific. When I entered the room where the experiments were to take place, the body of a man named Carter, which had been cut down from the gallows scarce half an hour, was lying on the table; and the cap being removed, his features, distorted with the agonies of suffocation, were visible. The crime he had been hanged for was murder; and a brawny, desperate ruffian he looked. None of his clothes were removed. He wore a fustian jacket and drab knee-breeches. The first time that the galvanic shock was conveyed to him will never, I dare say, be forgotten by any one present. We all shrunk from the table in consternation, with the momentary belief that we had positively brought the man back to life; for he suddenly sprang up into a sitting posture—his arms waved wildly—the colour rushed into his cheeks—his lips were drawn apart, so as to show all his teeth—and his eyes glared at us with apparent fury. One young man, a medical student, shrieked violently, and was carried out in a swoon. One gentleman present, who happened to be nearest to the upper part of the body, was almost knocked down with the violent blow he received from the left arm. It was some time before any of us could recover presence of mind sufficient to proceed with the experiments.

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brought with it awful apprehensions, or, at least, a fearful degree of uncertainty."

"Well—between ourselves, ——, there was something *very* strange in the coincidence, was not there? Nothing in life ever shook my firmness as it was shaken yesterday! I almost fancied the earth was quivering in its sphere!"

"It *was* a dreadful day!—One I shall never forget! *That* is the image of it," I exclaimed, pointing to the poor sufferer—"which will be engraven on my mind as long as I live! But the worst is perhaps yet to be told you: Mr N——, her lover, to whom she was very soon to have been married, HE will be here shortly to see her"——

"My God!" exclaimed Dr D——, clasping his hands, eyeing Miss P—— with intense commiseration—"What a fearful bride for him!"

"I dread his coming—I know not what we shall do! And then there's her *mother*, poor old lady!—her I have written to, and expect almost hourly!"

"Why, what an accumulation of shocks and miseries!—it will be upsetting *you!*" said my friend, seeing my distressed appearance.

"Well," he continued, "I cannot now stay here longer—your misery is catching; and, besides, I am most pressingly engaged; but you may rely on my services, if you should require them in any way."

My friend took his departure, leaving me more disconsolate than ever. Before retiring to bed, I rubbed in mustard upon the chief surfaces of the body, hoping, though faintly, that it might have some effect in rousing the system. I kneeled down, before stepping into bed, and earnestly prayed, that as all human efforts seemed baffled, the Almighty would set her free from the mortal thraldom in which she lay, and restore her to life, and those who loved her more than life! Morning came—it found me by her bedside as usual, and her in no wise altered, apparently neither better nor worse! If the unvarying monotony of my description should fatigue the reader, what must the actual monotony and hopelessness have been to me!

While I was sitting beside Miss P——, I heard my youngest boy come down stairs, and ask to be let into the room. He was a little fair-haired youngster, about three years of age, and had always been an especial favourite of Miss P——'s—her "own sweet pet"—as the poor girl herself called him. Determined to throw no chance away, I beckoned him in, and took him on my knee. He called to Miss P——, as if he thought her asleep; patted her face with his little hands, and kissed her. "Wake, wake!—Cousin Aggy, get up!" he cried—"Papa say 'tis time to get up! Do you sleep with eyes open?*—Eh?—Cousin Aggy?" He looked at her intently for some moments, and seemed frightened. He turned pale, and struggled to get off my knee. I allowed him to go, and he ran to his mother, who was standing at the foot of the bed, and hid his face behind her.

I passed breakfast-time in great apprehension, expecting the two arrivals I have mentioned. I knew not how to prepare either the mother or the betrothed husband for the scene that awaited them, and which I had not particularly described to them. It was with no little trepidation that I heard the startling knock of the general postman; and with infinite astonishment and doubt that I took out of the servant's hands a letter from Mr N—— for poor Agnes! For a while I knew not what to make of it. Had he received the alarming express I had forwarded to him; and did he write to Miss P——? Or was he unexpectedly absent from Oxford when it arrived? The latter supposition was corroborated by the post-mark, which I observed was Lincoln. I felt it my duty to open the letter. Alas! it was in a gay strain—unusually gay for N——; informing Agnes that he had been suddenly summoned into Lincolnshire, to his cousin's wedding,

* I had been examining her eyes, and had only half closed the lids.

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where he was very happy, both on account of his relative's happiness, and the anticipation of a similar scene being in store for himself! Every line was buoyant with hope and animation; but the postscript most affected me.

"P.S.—*The tenth of July*, by the way, my Agnes! *Is* it all over with us, sweet Pythonissa? Are you and I at this moment on separate fragments of the globe? I shall seal my conquest over you with a kiss when I see you! Remember, you parted from me in a pet, naughty one!—and kissed me rather coldly! But that is the way that your sex always end arguments, when you are vanquished!"

I read these lines in silence;—my wife burst into tears. I hastened to send a second summons to Mr N——, and directed it to him in Lincoln, where he had requested Miss P—— to address him. Without explaining the precise nature of Miss P——'s seizure, I gave him warning that he must hurry up to town instantly; and that, even then, it was doubtful whether he would see her alive. After this little occurrence, I could hardly trust myself to go up-stairs again, and look upon the unfortunate girl. My heart fluttered at the door, and when I entered I burst into tears. I could utter no more than the words, "poor—poor Agnes!" and withdrew.

I was shocked, and indeed enraged, to find, in one of the morning papers, a paragraph stating, though inaccurately, the nature of Miss P——'s illness. Who could have been so unfeeling as to make the poor girl an object of public wonder and pity? I never ascertained, though I made every inquiry, from whom the intelligence was communicated.

One of my patients that day happened to be a niece of the venerable and honoured Dean of ——, at whose house she resided. He was in the room when I called; and to explain what he called "the gloom of my manner," I gave him a full account of the melancholy event which had occurred. He listened to me till the tears ran down his face.

"But you have not yet tried the effect of *music*—of which you say she is so fond! Do not you intend to resort to it?" I told him it was our intention, and that our agitation was the only reason why we did not try the effect of it immediately after the galvanism.

"Now, doctor, excuse an old clergyman, will you?" said the venerable and pious dean, laying his hand on my arm; "and let me suggest that the experiment may not be the less successful, with the blessing of God, if it be introduced in the course of a religious service. Come, doctor, what say you?" I paused.

"Have you any objection to my calling at your house this evening, and reading the service appointed by our church for the visitation of the sick? It will not be difficult to introduce the most solemn and affecting strains of music, or to let it precede or follow." Still I hesitated—and yet I scarce knew why. "Come, doctor, you know I am no enthusiast—I am not generally considered a fanatic. Surely when man has done his best, and fails, he should not hesitate to turn to God!" The good old man's words sunk into my soul, and diffused in it a cheerful and humble hope that the blessing of Providence would attend the means suggested. I acquiesced in the dean's proposal with delight, and even eagerness; and it was arranged that he should be at my house between seven and eight o'clock that evening. I think I have already observed, that I had an organ, a very fine and powerful one, in my back drawing-room; and this instrument had been the eminent delight of poor Miss P——. She would sit down at it for hours together, and her performance would not have disgraced a professor. I hoped that on the eventful occasion that was approaching, the tones of her favourite instrument, with the blessing of Heaven, might rouse a slumbering responsive chord in her bosom, and aid in dispelling the cruel "charm that deadened her." She certainly could not last long in the condition in which she now lay. Every-

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thing that medicine could do, had been tried—in vain; and if the evening's experiment—our forlorn hope, failed—we must, though with a bleeding heart, submit to the will of Providence, and resign her to the grave. I looked forward with intense anxiety—with alternate hope and fear—to the engagement of the evening.

On returning home, late in the afternoon, I found poor Mrs P—— had arrived in town, in obedience to my summons; and heart-breaking, I learnt, was her first interview, if such it may be called, with her daughter. Her groans and cries alarmed the whole house, and even arrested the attention of the neighbours. I had left instructions, that in case of her arrival during my absence, she should be shown at once, without any precautions, into the presence of Miss P——; with the hope, faint though it was, that the abruptness of her appearance, and the violence of her grief might operate as a salutary shock upon the stagnant energies of her daughter. "My child! my child! my child!" she exclaimed, rushing up to the bed with frantic haste, and clasping the insensible form of her daughter in her arms, where she held her till she fell fainting into those of my wife. What a dread contrast was there between the frantic gestures—the passionate lamentations of the mother, and the stony silence and motionlessness of the daughter! One little but affecting incident occurred in my presence. Mrs P—— (as yet unacquainted with the peculiar nature of her daughter's seizure) had snatched Miss P——'s hand to her lips, kissed it repeatedly, and suddenly let it go, to press her own hand upon her head, as if to repress a rising hysterical feeling. Miss P——'s arm, as usual, remained for a moment or two suspended, and only gradually sunk down upon the bed. It looked as if she voluntarily continued it in that position, with a cautioning air. Methinks I see at this moment the affrighted stare with which Mrs P—— regarded the outstretched arm, her body recoiling from the bed, as though she expected her daughter were about to do or appear something dreadful! I subsequently learned from Mrs P—— that her mother, the grandmother of Agnes, was reported to have been twice affected in a similar manner, though apparently from a different cause; so that there seemed something like a hereditary tendency towards it, even though Mrs P—— herself had never experienced anything of the kind.

As the memorable evening advanced, the agitation of all who were acquainted with, or interested in the approaching ceremony, increased. Mrs P——, I need hardly say, embraced the proposal with thankful eagerness. About half-past seven, my friend Dr D—— arrived, pursuant to his promise; and he was soon afterwards followed by the organist of the neighbouring church—an old acquaintance, and who was a constant visitor at my house, for the purpose of performing and giving instructions on the organ. I requested him to commence playing Martin Luther's hymn—the favourite one of Agnes—as soon as she should be brought into the room. About eight o'clock, the dean's carriage drew up. I met him at the door.

"Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in it!" he exclaimed as soon as he entered. I led him up-stairs; and, without uttering a word, he took the seat prepared for him, before a table on which lay a Bible and Prayer-Book. After a moment's pause, he directed the sick person to be brought into the room. I stepped up-stairs, where I found my wife, with the nurse, had finished dressing Miss P——. I thought her paler than usual, and that her cheeks seemed hollower than when I had last seen her. There was an air of melancholy sweetness and languor about her, that inspired the beholder with the keenest sympathy. With a sigh, I gathered her slight form into my arms, a shawl was thrown over her, and, followed by my wife and the nurse, who supported Mrs P——, I carried her down stairs, and placed her in an easy recumbent posture, in a large old family chair, which stood between the organ and the dean's table. How strange and mournful

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was her appearance! Her luxuriant hair was gathered up beneath a cap, the whiteness of which was equalled by that of her countenance. Her eyes were closed; and this, added to the paleness of her features, her perfect passiveness, and her being enveloped in a long white unruffled morning dress, which appeared not unlike a shroud at first sight—made her look rather a corpse than a living being! As soon as Dr D—— and I had taken seats on each side of our poor patient, the solemn strains of the organ commenced. I never appreciated music, and especially the sublime hymn of Luther, so much as on that occasion. My eyes were fixed with agonising scrutiny on Miss P——. Bar after bar of the music melted on the ear, and thrilled upon the heart; but, alas! produced no more effect upon the placid sufferer than the pealing of an abbey organ on the statues around! My heart began to misgive me: if *this* one last experiment failed! When the music ceased we all kneeled down, and the dean, in a solemn tone of voice, commenced reading appropriate passages from the service for the visitation of the sick. When he had concluded the 71st Psalm, he approached the chair of Miss P——, dropped upon one knee, held her right hand in his, and in a somewhat tremulous voice, read the following affecting verses from the 8th chapter of St Luke:—

"While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the master.

"But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not; believe only, and she shall be made whole.

"And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

"And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, *Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.*"

While he was reading the passage which I have marked in italics, my heated fancy almost persuaded me that I saw the eyelids of Miss P—— moving. I trembled from head to foot; but, alas! it was a delusion.

The dean, much affected, was proceeding with the fifty-fifth verse, when such a tremendous and long-continued knocking was heard at the street door as seemed likely to break it open. Every one started up from their knees, as if electrified—all moved but unhappy Agnes—and stood in silent agitation and astonishment. Still the knocking was continued, almost without intermission. My heart suddenly misgave me as to the cause.

"Go—go—See if"—stammered my wife, pale as ashes—endeavouring to prop up the drooping mother of our patient. Before any one had stirred from the spot on which he was standing, the door was burst open, and in rushed Mr N——, wild in his aspect, frantic in his gesture, and his dress covered with dust from head to foot. We stood gazing at him as though his appearance had petrified us.

"Agnes!—my Agnes!" he exclaimed, as if choked for want of breath.

"Agnes!—Come!" he gasped, while a smile appeared on his face that had a gleam of madness in it.

"Mr N——! what are you about? For mercy's sake, be calm! Let me lead you, for a moment, into another room, and all shall be explained!" said I, approaching and grasping him firmly by the arm.

"Agnes!" he continued in a tone that made us tremble. He moved towards the chair in which Miss P—— lay. I endeavoured to interpose, but he thrust me aside. The venerable dean attempted to dissuade him, but met with no better a reception than myself.

"Agnes!" he reiterated in a hoarse whisper, "why won't you speak to me? what are they doing to you?" He



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stepped within a foot of the chair where she lay—calm and immovable as death! We stood by watching his movements, in terrified apprehension and uncertainty. He dropped his hat, which he had been grasping with convulsive force, and before any one could prevent him, or even suspect what he was about, he snatched Miss P—— out of the chair, and compressed her in his arms with frantic force, while a delirious laugh burst from his lips. We rushed forward to extricate her from his grasp. His arms gradually relaxed—he muttered, "Music! music! a dance!" and almost at the moment that we removed Miss P—— from him, fell senseless into the arms of the organist. Mrs P—— had fainted; my wife seemed on the verge of hysterics; and the nurse was crying violently. Such a scene of trouble and terror I have seldom witnessed! I hurried with the poor unconscious girl up-stairs, laid her upon the bed, shut and bolted the door after me, and hardly expected to find her alive: her pulse, however, was calm as it had been throughout the seizure. The calm of the Dead Sea seemed upon her!

* * * *

I feel, however, that I should not protract these painful scenes; and shall therefore hurry to their close. The first letter which I had despatched to Oxford after Mr N——, happened to bear on the outside the words, "*special haste!*" which procured its being forwarded by express after Mr N——. The consternation with which he received and read it may be imagined. He set off for town that instant in a post-chaise and four; but finding their speed insufficient, he took to horseback for the last fifty miles, and rode at a rate which nearly destroyed both horse and rider. Hence his sudden appearance at my house, and the frenzy of his behaviour! After Miss P—— had been carried up-stairs, it was thought imprudent for Mr N—— to continue at my house, as he exhibited every symptom of incipient brain fever, and might prove wild and unmanageable. He was therefore removed at once to a house within a few doors off, which was let out in furnished lodgings. Dr D—— accompanied him, and bled him immediately, very copiously. I have no doubt that Mr N—— owed his life to that timely measure. He was placed in bed, and put at once under the most vigorous antiphlogistic treatment.

The next evening beheld Dr D——, the Dean of ——, and myself around the bedside of Agnes. All of us expressed the most gloomy apprehensions. The dean had been offering up a devout and most affecting prayer.

"Well, my friend," said he to me, "she is in the hands of God. All that man can do has been done; let us resign ourselves to the will of Providence!"

"Ay, nothing but a miracle can save her, I fear," replied Dr D——.

"How much longer do you think it probable, humanly speaking, that the system can continue in this state, so as to give hopes of ultimate recovery?" inquired the dean.

"I cannot say," I replied with a sigh. "She *must* sink, and speedily. She has not received, since she was first seized, as much nourishment as would serve for an infant's meal!"

"I have an impression that she will die suddenly," said Dr D——; "possibly within the next twelve hours; for I cannot understand how her energies can recover from, or bear longer, this fearful paralysis!"

"Alas, I fear so too!" * *

"I have heard some frightful instances of premature burial in cases like this," said the dean. "I hope you will not think of committing her remains to the earth, before you are satisfied, beyond a doubt, that life is extinct." I made no reply—my emotions nearly choked me—I could not bear to contemplate such an event.

"Do you know," said Dr D——, with an apprehensive air, "I have been thinking latterly of the awful possibility, that, notwithstanding the stagnation of her physical powers, her MIND may be sound, and perfectly conscious of all that has transpired about her!"

"Why—why," stammered the Dean,

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turning pale—"what if she has—has heard all that has been said!"*

"Ay!" replied Dr D——, unconsciously sinking his voice to a whisper, "I know of a case—in fact, a friend of mine has just published it—in which a woman"—— There was a faint knocking at the door, and I stepped to it, for the purpose of inquiring what was wanted. While I was in the act of closing it again, I overheard Dr D——'s voice exclaim in an affrighted tone, "Great God!" and on turning round, I saw the dean moving from the bed, his face white as ashes, and he fell from his chair as if in a fit. How shall I describe what I saw on approaching the bed?

The moment before I had left Miss P—— lying in her usual position, and with her eyes closed. They were now wide open, and staring upwards with an expression I have no language to describe. It reminded me of what I had seen when I first discovered her in the fit. Blood, too, was streaming from her nostrils and mouth—in short, a more frightful spectacle I never witnessed. In a moment, both Dr D—— and I seemed to have lost all power of motion. Here, then, was the spell broken! The trance over!—I implored Dr D—— to recollect himself, and conduct the dean from the room, while I would attend to Miss P——. The nurse was instantly at my side, but violently agitated. She quickly procured warm water, sponges, cloths, &c., with which she at once wiped away and encouraged the bleeding. The first sound uttered by Miss P—— was a long deep-drawn sigh, which seemed to relieve her bosom of an intolerable sense of oppression. Her eyes gradually closed again, and she moved her head away, at the same time raising her trembling right hand to her face. Again she sighed—again opened her eyes, and, to my delight, their expression was more natural than before. She looked languidly about her for a moment, as if examining the bed-curtains—and her eyes closed again. I sent for some weak brandy-and-water, and gave her a little in a teaspoon. She swallowed it with great difficulty. I ordered some warm water to be got ready for her feet, to equalise the circulation; and while it was preparing, sat by her watching every motion of her features with the most eager anxiety. "How are you, Agnes?" I whispered. She turned languidly towards me, opened her eyes, and shook her head feebly—but gave me no answer.

"Do you feel pain anywhere?" I inquired. A faint smile stole about her mouth, but she did not utter a syllable. Sensible that her exhausted condition required repose, I determined not to tax her newly-recovered energies; so I ordered her a gentle composing draught and left her in the care of the nurse, promising to return by and by, to see how my sweet patient went on. I found that the dean had left. After swallowing a little wine and water, he recovered sufficiently from the shock he had received, to be able, with Dr D——'s assistance, to step into his carriage, leaving his solemn benediction for Miss P——.

As it was growing late, I sent my wife to bed, and ordered coffee in my study, whither I retired, and sat lost in conjecture and reverie till nearly one o'clock. I then repaired to my patient's room; but my entrance startled her from a sleep that had lasted almost since I had left. As soon as I sat down by her, she opened her eyes—and my heart leaped with joy to see their increasing calmness—their expression resembling what had oft delighted me while she was in health. After eyeing me steadily for a few moments, she seemed suddenly to recognise me. "Doctor ——!" she whispered, in the faintest possible whisper, while a smile stole over her languid features. I gently grasped her hand; and in doing so my tears fell upon her cheek.

"How strange!" she whispered again in a tone as feeble as before. She gently moved her hand into mine, and I clasped the trembling lilied

* In almost every known instance of recovery from catalepsy, the patients have declared that they heard every word that had been uttered beside them!

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fingers, with an emotion I cannot express. She noticed my agitation; and the tears came into her eyes, while her lip quivered, as though she were going to speak. I implored her, however, not to utter a word, till she was better able to do it without exhaustion; and, lest my presence should tempt her beyond her strength, I bade her good-night—her poor slender fingers once more compressed mine—and I left her to the care of the nurse, with a whispered injunction to step to me instantly if any change took place in Agnes. I could not sleep! I felt a prodigious burden removed from my mind; and woke my wife that she might share in my joy.

I received no summons during the night; and on entering her room about nine o'clock in the morning, I found that Miss P—— had taken a little arrow-root in the course of the night, and slept calmly, with but few intervals. She had sighed frequently; and once or twice conversed for a short time with the nurse about *heaven*—as I understood. She was much stronger than I had expected to find her. I welcomed her affectionately, and she asked me how I was—in a tone that surprised me by its strength and firmness.

"Is the storm over?" she inquired, looking towards the window.

"Oh yes—long, long ago!" I replied, seeing at once that she seemed to have no consciousness of the interval that had elapsed.

"And are you all well?—Mrs ——" (my wife), "how is she?"

"You shall see her shortly."

"Then no one was hurt?"

"Not a hair of our heads!"

"How frightened I must have been!"

"Poh, poh, Agnes! Nonsense! Forget it!"

"Then—the world is not—there has been no—is all the same as it was?" she murmured, eyeing me apprehensively.

"The world come to an end—do you mean?" She nodded, with a disturbed air—"Oh, no, no! It was merely a thunder-storm."

"And is it quite over, and gone?"

"Long ago! Do you feel hungry?" I inquired, hoping to direct her thoughts from a topic I saw agitated her.

"Did you ever see such lightning?" she asked, without regarding my question.

"Why—certainly it was very alarming"—

"Yes, it was! Do you know, doctor," she continued, with a mysterious air—"I—I—saw—yes—there were strange faces in the lightning"—

"Come, child, you rave!"

—"They seemed coming towards the world."

Her voice trembled, the colour of her face changed.

"Well—if you *will* talk such nonsense, Agnes, I must leave you. I will go and fetch my wife. Would you like to see her?"

"*Tell N—— to come to me to-day*—I must see HIM. I have a message for him!" She said this with a sudden energy that surprised me, while her eye brightened as it settled on me. Her last words surprised and disturbed me. Were her intellects affected! How did she know—how could she conjecture that he was within reach? I took an opportunity of asking the nurse whether she had mentioned Mr N——'s name to her; but not a syllable had been interchanged upon the subject.

Before setting out on my daily visits, I stepped into her room, to take my leave. I was quitting the room, when, happening to look back, I saw her beckoning to me. I returned.

"I MUST see N—— this evening!" said she, with a solemn emphasis that startled me; and as soon as she had uttered the words, she turned her head from me, as if she wished no more to be said.

My first visit was to Mr N——, whom I found in a very weak state, but so much recovered from his illness as to be sitting up, and partially dressed. He was perfectly calm and collected; and, in answer to his earnest inquiries, I gave him a full account of the nature of Miss P——'s illness. He

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received the intelligence of the favourable change that had occurred with evident though silent ecstasy. After much inward doubt and hesitation, I thought I might venture to tell him of the parting—the twice-repeated request she had made. The intelligence blanched his already pallid cheeks to a whiter hue, and he trembled violently.

"Did you tell her I was in town? Did she recollect me?"

"No one has breathed your name to her!" I replied.

* * * *

"Well, doctor, if, on the whole, you think so—that it would be safe," said N——, after we had talked much on the matter—"I will step over and see her; but—it looks very—very strange!"

"Whatever whim may actuate her, I think it better, on the whole, to gratify her. Your refusal *may* be attended with infinitely worse effects than an interview. However, you shall hear from me again. I will see if she continues in the same mind; and if so, I will step over and tell you."—I took my leave.

A few moments before stepping down to dinner, I sat beside Miss P——, making my usual inquiries; and was gratified to find that her progress, though slow, seemed sure. I was leaving, when, with similar emphasis to that she had previously displayed, she again said—

"*Remember!* N—— MUST be here to-night!"

I was confounded. What could be the meaning of this mysterious pertinacity? I felt distracted with doubt, and dissatisfied with myself for what I had told to N——. I felt answerable for whatever ill effects might ensue; and yet what could I do?

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It was evening—a mild, though lustrous July evening. The skies were all blue and white, save where the retiring sunlight produced a mellow mixture of colours towards the west. Not a breath of air disturbed the serene complacency. My wife and I sat on each side of the bed where lay our lovely invalid, looking, despite her illness, beautiful, and in comparative health. Her hair was parted with negligent simplicity over her pale forehead. Her eyes were brilliant, and her cheeks occasionally flushed. She spoke scarce a word to us as we sat beside her. I gazed at her with doubt and apprehension. I was aware that health could not possibly produce the colour and vivacity of her complexion and eyes; and felt at a loss to what I should refer it.

"Agnes, love!—How beautiful is the setting sun!" exclaimed my wife, drawing aside the curtains.

"Raise me! Let me look at it!" replied Miss P—— faintly. She gazed earnestly at the magnificent object for some minutes; and then abruptly said to me—

"He will be here soon?"

"In a few moments I expect him. But—Agnes—why do you wish to see him?"

She sighed, and shook her head.

It had been arranged that Dr D—— should accompany Mr N—— to my house, and conduct him up-stairs, after strongly enjoining on him the necessity there was for controlling his feelings, and displaying as little emotion as possible. My heart leaped into my mouth—as the saying is—when I heard the expected knock at the door.

"N—— is come at last!" said I in a gentle tone, looking earnestly at her, to see if she was agitated. It was not the case. She sighed, but evinced no trepidation.

"Shall he be shown in at once?" I inquired.

"No—wait a few moments," replied the extraordinary girl, and seemed lost in thought for about a minute. "Now!" she exclaimed; and I sent down the nurse, herself pale and trembling with apprehension, to request the attendance of Dr D—— and Mr N——.

As they were heard slowly approaching the room, I looked anxiously at my patient, and kept my fingers at her pulse. There was not a symptom of flutter or agitation.

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At length the door was opened, and Dr D—— slowly entered, with N—— upon his arm. As soon as his pale trembling figure was visible, a calm and heavenly smile beamed upon the countenance of Miss P——. It was full of ineffable loveliness! She stretched out her right arm; he pressed it to his lips, without uttering a word.

My eyes were riveted on the features of Miss P——. Either they deceived me, or I saw a strange alteration—as if a cloud were stealing over her face. I was right!—We all observed her colour fading rapidly. I rose from my chair; Dr D—— also came nearer, thinking she was on the verge of fainting. Her eye was fixed upon the flushed features of her lover. and gleamed with radiance. She gently elevated both her arms towards him, and he leaned over her.

"PREPARE!" she exclaimed, in a low thrilling tone;—her features became paler and paler—her arms fell. She had spoken—she had breathed her last. She was dead!

Within twelve months poor N—— followed her; and, to the period of his death, no other word or thought seemed to occupy his mind but the momentous warning which had issued from the lips of Agnes P——, PREPARE!

I have no mystery to solve, no denouement to make. I tell the facts as they occurred; and hope they may not be told in vain!

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# CHAPTER XXV.

## THE MAGDALEN.

DESPISED daughter of frailty! Outcast of outcasts! Poor wayward lamb, torn by the foulest wolf of the forest! My tears shall fall on your memory, as often they did over the wretched recital of sin and shame which I listened to on your deserted deathbed! Oh, that they could have fallen on you early enough to wash away the first stain of guilt; that they could have trickled down upon your heart in time to soften it once more into virtue!

Ill-fated victim, towards whom the softest heart of tenderness that throbs in your sex, beats, not with sympathy, but scorn and anger! *My* heart hath yearned towards thee, when none else knew of thee, or cared for thy fate! Yes; and above all, (devoutly be the hope expressed!) the voice of Heaven whispered in thine aching ear peace and forgiveness; so that death was but as the dark seal of thy pardon registered in the courts of Eternal Mercy!

Many as are the scenes of guilt and misery sketched in this Diary, I know not that I have approached any with feelings of deeper grief than that which it is my painful lot now to lay before the public. Reader, if your tears start, if your heart ache as you go on with the gloomy narrative—pause, that those tears may swell into a stream, that that heart may well-nigh break, to think how common, how everyday is the story!

Look round you, upon the garden of humanity; see where the lilies, lovely and white as snow in their virgin purity, are blooming—see—see how many of them suddenly fade, wither, fall! Go nearer, and behold an adder lying coiled around their stems! Think of this—and then be yourself—young man, or old—THAT ADDER if you can!

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About nine o'clock on a miserable Sunday evening, in October 18—, we were sitting quietly at home around our brisk fire, listening, in occasional intervals of silence, to the rain which, as it had during the whole of the day, still came down heavily, accompanied with the dreary whistling of the wind. The gloom without served but to enhance by contrast the cheerfulness—the sense of snugness within. I was watching my good wife discharge her regular Sunday evening duty of catechising the children, and pleasing myself with the promptitude and accuracy of my youngest child's replies, when the servant brought me up word that I was wanted below. I went down stairs immediately. In the hall, just beneath the lamp, sat the ungainly figure of a short, fat, bloated old Jewess.

"This here lady wishes to see you, sir," said she, rising with a confident, and I fancied somewhat tipsy, tone and air, and handing to me a small dirty slip of paper, on which was written, "Miss Edwards, No. 11, —— Court, —— Street (3d Floor)." The handwriting of the paper, hasty as was the glance I gave at it, struck me. It was small and elegant, but evidently the production of a weak or unsteady hand.

"Pray, what is the matter with this lady?" I inquired.

"Matter, sir? Matter enough, I warrant me! The young woman's not long to live, as I reckon. She's worn out—that's all!" she replied, with a freedom amounting to rudeness, which at once gave me an inkling of her real character. "Do you think it absolutely necessary for me to call on her to-night?" I inquired, not much liking the sort of place I was likely to be led to.

"*She* does, I fancy, poor thing—and she *really* looks very ill!"

"Is it any sudden illness?"

"No, sir—it's been coming on this long time—ever since she came to live with me. My daughter and I thinks 'tis a decline."

"Couldn't you take her to a dispensary?" said I, doubtingly.

"Marry—you'll be *paid* for your visit, I suppose. Isn't that enough?" said the woman, with an impudent air.

"Well, well—I'll follow you in a minute or two," said I, opening the street door, for there was something in the woman's appearance that I hated to have in my house.

"I say, sir!" she called out, in an under-tone, as I was somewhat unceremoniously shutting the door upon her, "you mustn't be put out of your way, mind, if any of my girls should be about. They're noisy devils, to be sure, but they won't meddle"—— The closing of the door prevented my hearing the conclusion of the sentence. I stood for a few moments irresolute. My duty, however, so far seemed clear, and all minor considerations, I thought, should give way; so I equipped myself quickly, and set out on my walk, which was as unpleasant as wind, rain, and darkness could make it.

I do not see why I should mince matters by hesitating to state that the house in which I found myself, after about ten minutes' walk, was one of ill fame—and that, too, apparently, of the lowest and vilest description. The street which led to —— Court was narrow, ill lighted, and noisy—swarming with persons and places of infamous character. I was almost alarmed for my personal safety as I passed them; and, on entering the court, trembled for a valuable repeater I had about me. At that moment, too, I happened to recollect having read, some time before, in a police report, an account of a method of entrapping unwary persons, very similar in circumstances to those in which I found myself at that moment. A medical man was suddenly summoned to see—he was told—a dying patient; but, on reaching the residence of the supposed invalid, he was set upon unexpectedly by thieves, robbed of everything he had about him, and turned into the street, severely, if not dangerously, beaten. A pleasant reminiscence! Concealing, however, my watch as well as I could, and buttoning my great-coat up to the chin, I resolved

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to persevere, trusting to the protection of Providence. The life of a fellow-creature might really be at stake; and, besides, I was no stranger to scenes of misery and destitution among the lowest orders.

—— Court was a nest of hornets. The dull light of a single lamp in the middle of it, showed me the slatternly half-dressed figures of young women, clustering about the open doors of every house in the court, and laughing loudly, as they occasionally shouted their vile ribaldries to one another across the court. All this was sickening and ill-omened enough; but I resolved not even yet to give up. No. 11, I found, was the last house in the court; and just as I was going to inquire of a filthy creature squatting on the door-steps, she called out to some one within, "Mother! mother!—here's the doctor come to see Sall!"

Her "mother," the wretch who had called upon me, presently waddled unsteadily to the door, with a candle in her hand. She seemed to have been disturbed at drinking; and, a little to my alarm, I heard the gruff voice of a man in the room she had just quitted.

"Please to follow me, sir. This way, sir. The young woman is upstairs. Bett!" she called out, suddenly stopping, and turning round, "come and take this here gentleman's wet umbrella, and dry it by the fire!"

"Thank you—thank you—I'll not trouble you! I'll carry it with me; 'tis not *very* wet," I replied hastily, as I held it—but dripping at every step. I did not choose, believe me, to part with what I might never see again. It might, too—though God prevent the occasion!—be a small matter of defence to me, if my fears about the nature of my errand should be verified. The moment, however, that the bedroom door was opened, other emotions than that of apprehension occupied my mind. The apartment was little if at all superior to that which I have described in a former paper, as the residence of the Irish family, the "O'Hurdles;"* but it was much smaller, and infinitely filthier. A candle, that seemed never to have been snuffed, stood on the chimney-piece, beside one or two filthy cups and jugs, shedding a dull dismal sort of twilight over an old rush-bottomed chair or two, a small rickety chest of drawers, an old hair trunk with the lid broken in, a small circular table, on which was a phial and a teacup; and along the further extremity of the room, a wretched pallet, all tossed and disordered. A scanty fire was burning in a very small grate, and the inclemency of the weather seemed completely excluded by a little window, two-thirds of whose panes were, however, stuffed with rags, paper, &c. I felt disposed, immediately on entering, to remove one of them, for there was a horrid closeness in the room.

"Well, there she is in the bed, poor devil, ill enough, I'll answer for't," said the old woman, panting with the effort of ascending the stairs. Reaching down the candle from the chimney-piece, she snuffed it with her fingers, and set it upon the table; and then, after stirring up the fire, she took up the candle she had brought, and withdrew, saying, as she went out, "Miss Edwards said she'd rather see you alone, so I'm off, you know. If you want anything, I dare say you can call out for it; some of the girls will be sure to hear you."

I was happy to be relieved of her presence. When the door had closed upon her, I drew one of the chairs to the bedside, together with the table and candle, and beheld the figure of a female lying on her back amidst the disordered clothes, her black hair stretched dishevelled over the dirty pillow, and her face completely concealed beneath both hands.

"Well, madam, are you in much pain?" I inquired, gently trying, at the same time, to disengage her right hand, that I might both feel her pulse and see her countenance. I did not succeed, however, for her hands were clasped over her face with some little force; and as I made the effort I have mentioned, a faint sob burst from her.

"Come, come, madam," I continued,

* "Rich and Poor," page 221.

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in as gentle a tone as I could, renewing the effort to dislodge her hand, "I'm afraid you are in much pain! Don't, however, prevent my doing what little may be in my power to relieve you!" Still her hands moved not. "I am Dr ——; you yourself sent for me! What is ailing you? You need not hide your face from me in this strange way!—Come"——

"There, then!—*Do you know me?*" she exclaimed, in a faint shriek, at the same time starting up suddenly in bed, and removing her hands from her face, which—her hair pressed away on each side by her hands—was turned towards me with an anguished, affrighted stare, her features white and wasted. The suddenness and singularity of the action sufficiently startled me. She continued in the same attitude and expression of countenance (the latter most vividly recalling to my mind that of Mrs Siddons, celebrated in pictures, in the most agitating crisis of her Lady Macbeth), breathing in short quick gasps, and with her eyes fixed wildly upon me. If the look did not petrify me, as the fabled head of Medusa, it shocked, or rather horrified me, beyond all expression, as I gazed at it; for—could my eyes see aright?—I gradually *recognised* the face as one known to me. The cold thrill that passed through me, the sickening sensations I then experienced, creep over me now that I am writing.

"Why—am I right?—ELEANOR!" I exclaimed faintly, my hands elevated with consternation, at the same time almost doubting the evidence of my senses. She made me no reply, but shook her head with frantic violence for a few moments, and then sunk exhausted on her pillow. I would have spoken to her—I would have touched her; but the shock of what I had just seen had momentarily unnerved me. I did not recover my self-possession till I found that she had fainted. Oh, mercy, mercy! what a wreck of beauty was I gazing on! Could it be possible? Was this pallid, worn-out, death-struck creature, lying in such a den of guilt and pollution? Was this the gay and beautiful girl I had once known as the star of the place where she resided—whom my wife knew—whom, in short, we had both known, and that familiarly? The truth flashed in a moment over my shuddering, reluctant soul. I must be gazing on the spoil of the seducer! I looked with horror, not to say loathing, on her lifeless features, till I began to doubt whether, after all, they could really be those I took them to be. But her extraordinary conduct—there could be no mistake when I thought of that.

With the aid of a vinaigrette, which I always carried about with me, and dashing a little cold water in her face, she gradually revived. The moment her slowly-opening eyes fell upon me, she closed them again, turned aside her head with a convulsive start, and covered her face, as before, with her hands.

"Come, come, Miss B——,"— a stifled groan burst from her lips on hearing me mention her real name, and she shook her head with agony unutterable, "you *must* be calm, or I can do nothing for you. There's nothing to alarm you, surely, in me! I am come at your own request, and wish to be of service to you. Tell me at once, now, where do you feel pain?"

"HERE!" replied the wretched girl, placing her left hand with convulsive energy upon her heart. Oh, the tone of her voice! I would to Heaven—I would to Heaven, that the blackest seducer on earth could have been present to hear her utter that *one word!*

"Have you any pain in the other side?" I inquired, looking away from her to conceal my emotion, and trying to count her pulses. She nodded with an anguished air in the affirmative.

"Do you spit much during the day? Any blood, Miss B——?"

"Miss B——!" she echoed with a smile of mingled despair and grief; "call me rather *Devil!* Don't mock me with kind words! Don't, doctor! No, not a word—a single word—a word," she continued with increasing wildness of tone and air. "See, I'm prepared! I'm beforehand! I expected something like this!—Don't—don't dare me! Look!" She suddenly thrust

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her right hand under the bed-clothes, and, to my horror, drew from under them a table-knife, which she shook before me with the air of a maniac. I wrenched it out of her hand with little difficulty.

"Well, then—so—so"—she gasped, clutching at her throat with both hands. I rose up from my chair, telling her in a stern tone, that if she persisted in such wild antics, I should leave her at once; that my time was valuable, and the hour besides growing late.

"Go—go, then! Desert one whom the world has already deserted!—Yes, go—go away—I deserve no better—and yet—from what I *once* knew of you—I did not expect it!" exclaimed the miserable girl, bursting into a flood of bitter but relieving tears. Finding that what I had said had produced its desired effect, I resumed my seat. There was a silence of several moments.

"I—I suppose you are shocked—to—to see me here—but you've heard it all"——said she faintly.

"Oh—we'll talk about that by and by! I must first see about your health. I am afraid you are *very* ill; haven't you been long so?—Why did not you send for me earlier?—Rely upon it, you need not have sent twice!"

"Oh—can you ask me, doctor?—I dared not!—I wish—oh, how I wish I had not sent for you *now!* The sight of you has driven me nearly mad! You must see that it has—but you did not mean it! Oh!—oh!—oh!" she groaned, apparently half choked—"what I feel HERE!" pressing both her hands upon her heart, "what a *hell!*" quivering forth the last word with an intonation that was fearful.

"Once more—I entreat you to check your feelings, otherwise it is absurd for me to be here! What good can I possibly do you, if you rave in this manner?" said I, speaking sternly. She made no reply, but suddenly coughed violently; then started up in the bed, felt about in haste for her handkerchief, raised it to her lips, and drew it away marked with blood.

She had burst a blood-vessel!

I was dreadfully alarmed for her. The incessant use she made of her handkerchief soon rendered it useless. It was steeped in blood. She pointed hurriedly to the drawers—I understood her—drew one of them open, and instantly brought her another handkerchief. That, also, was soon useless. In the intervals of this horrid work she attempted to speak to me—but I stopped her once for all, by laying my finger on my lips, and then addressing her solemnly—"In the name of God, I charge you to be silent! A word—a single word—and you are a dead woman! Your life is in the utmost danger"—again she seemed attempting to speak—"if you utter a syllable, I tell you it will destroy you; you know the consequences—you will therefore die a *suicide*—and, think of HEREAFTER!"

A smile—one I cannot attempt to characterise, but by saying it seemed an unearthly one—flitted for an instant over her features—and she did not seem disposed again to disobey my injunctions. I proceeded to bleed* her immediately, having obtained what was necessary—with great difficulty—without summoning any one for the present into the room. When she saw what I was about, she whispered faintly with a calm but surprised air—pointing to her steeped handkerchiefs—"What! more *blood!*"—I simply implored her to be silent, and trust herself in my hands. I bled her till she fainted. A few moments before she became insensible, while the deathlike hue and expression of fainting were stealing over her features, she exclaimed, though almost inaudibly—"Am I dying?"

When I had taken the requisite quantity of blood, I bound up the arm as well as I could, took out my pencil, hastily wrote a prescription on a slip of paper, and called for such assistance as might be within reach. A young

* I have often heard people express astonishment at the bleeding a patient who has already bled profusely from a ruptured vessel. It is with a view to lessening the heart's action, so as to diminish the volume of blood that it propels through the injured vessel, which may so have an opportunity of healing before it is called upon to perform its full functions.

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woman of odious appearance answered my summons by bursting noisily into the room.

"La!" she exclaimed, on catching a glimpse of the blood, and the pallid face of my patient—"La! Sure Sall's *booked!*"

"Hush, woman!" said I sternly, "take this"—giving her the prescription—"to the nearest druggist's shop, and get it made up immediately; and in the mean time send some elderly person here."

"Oh—her mother, eh?"

"Her *mother!*" I echoed with astonishment. She laughed, "La, now—you don't know the ways of these places. We all calls her mother!"

Pity for the miserable victim I had in charge, joined with disgust and horror at the persons about me, and the place in which I was, kept me silent—till the woman last alluded to made her appearance with the medicine I had ordered, and which I instantly poured into a cup and gave my patient. "Is the young woman much worse, sir?" she inquired in an under tone, and with something like concern of manner.

"Yes," I replied, laconically; "she must be taken care of, and that well—or she will not live the night out"—I whispered.

"Better take her to the hospital, at once—hadn't we?" she inquired, approaching the bed, and eyeing Miss Edwards with stupid, unfeeling curiosity.

"She is not to be moved out of her bed, at the peril of her life—not for many days. Mind, woman—I tell you that distinctly."

"You tell me that distinctly? And what the devil if you do? What, a God's name, is to be done with a sick young woman *here?* We've something else to do beside making our house into an hospital!"

I could with difficulty repress my indignation.

"Pray, for pity's sake, my good woman, don't speak so cruelly about this unfortunate girl! Consider how soon you may be lying on your own deathbed"——

"Deathbed be ——! Who's to pay for her if she stops here? *I* can't, and what's more, I won't—and I defy the parish to make me! She can't 'arn her living *now*, that's plain! But, by the way," she continued, suddenly addressing my patient, "Sally, you had money enough a few days ago, *I* know; where is it now?"

"My good woman," said I, gently removing her from the bedside, "do but leave the room for a moment. I will come down stairs and arrange everything with you."

"Leave the room! Ah, ha!—that you may bag the blunt—if there is any!" She seemed inclined to be obstreperous. "I tell you, you are *killing* this poor girl!" said I, my eye kindling upon the old monster with anger. Muttering some unintelligible words of ill temper, she suffered me to close the door upon her, and I once more took my seat at the bedside. Miss Edwards' face evidenced the agitation with which she had listened to the cruel and insolent language of the beldam in whose power she for the present lay. I trembled for the effect of it.

"Now, I entreat you, suffer me to have all the talking to myself for a moment or two. You can answer all my questions with a nod, or so. Do you think that if I were to send to you a nice respectable woman—a nurse from a dispensary with which I am connected—to attend upon you, the people of the house would let you remain quiet for a few days—till you could be removed? Nod, if you think so!" She looked at me with surprise while I talked about removing her, but she simply nodded in acquiescence.

"If you are well enough by and by, would you object to being taken from this place to a dispensary, where I would see to your comfort?" She shook her head.

"Are you indebted to any one here?"

"No, my guilt has paid"—— she whispered. I pressed my finger on my lips, and she ceased. "Well, we understand one another for the present. I must not stay much longer,

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and you must not be exhausted. I shall charge the people below to keep you quiet, and a kind experienced nurse shall be at your bedside within two hours from this time. I will leave orders, till she comes, with the woman of the house to give you your medicine, and to keep you quiet and the room cool. Now I charge you, by all your hopes of life—by all your fears of death—let nothing prevail on you to open your lips, unless it be absolutely necessary. Good evening—may God protect you!" I was rising, when she beckoned me into my seat again. She groped with her hand under her pillow for a moment, and brought out a purse.

"Poh poh! put it away—at least for the present!" said I.

"Your fee *must* be paid," she whispered.

"I visit you as a dispensary patient, and shall assuredly receive no fee. You cannot move me any more than you can shake St Paul's," said I in a peremptory tone. Dropping her purse, she seized my hand in both hers, and looking up at me with a woeful expression, her tears fell upon it. After a pause, she whispered, "Only a single word!—Mrs ——," naming my wife, "you will not tell her of me?" she inquired, with an imploring look. "No, I will not!" I replied, though I knew I should break my word the moment I got home. She squeezed my hand, and sighed heavily. I did not regret to see her beginning to grow drowsy with exhaustion, and perhaps the effect of the medicine I had given her, so I slipped quietly out of the room. Having no candle, I was obliged to grope my way down stairs in the dark. I was shocked and alarmed to hear, as I descended, by the angry voices both of men and women, that there was a disturbance down stairs. Oh, what a place for such a patient as I had quitted! I paused, when half-way down, to listen. "I tell you, I *didn't* take the watch," shrieked the infuriated voice of a female. "I'll be —— if I did."

"I saw you with it—I saw you with it!" replied a man's voice.

"You're a liar! A —— liar!" There was the sound of a scuffle.

"Come, come, my girl! Easy there! Easy!—Be quiet, or I'll take you *all* off to the watch-house!—Come, Bett, you'd better come off peaceably at once! This here gentleman says as how you've stolen his watch, and so you *must* go, of course!"—"I won't! I won't! I'll tear your eyes out! I'll see you all —— first! I will," yelled the voice I had first heard, and the uproar increased. Gracious Heaven! in what a place was I! was my wretched patient! I stood on the dark stairs, leaning on my umbrella, not knowing which way to go, or what to do. I resolved at length to go down; and on reaching the scene of all this uproar, found the passage and doorway choked with a crowd of men and women.

"What is the meaning of all this uproar?" I exclaimed in as authoritative a manner as I knew how to assume. "For God's sake be quiet! Do you know that there is a young woman dying up stairs?"

"Dying! And what's that to me? They say I'm a thief—He says I've got his watch—he does, the —— liar!" shouted a young woman, her dress almost torn off her shoulders, and her hair hanging loosely all about her head and neck, and almost covering her face. She tried to disengage herself from the grasp of a watchman, and struggled to reach a young man, who, with impassioned gestures, was telling the crowd that he had been robbed of his watch in the house. My soul was sick within me. I would fain have slipped away, once for all, from such a horid scene and neighbourhood, but the thoughts of her I had left above detained me.

"I wish to speak to you for a moment," said I, addressing the old proprietress of the house. "Speak to me, indeed!" she replied, scarce vouchsafing me a look, and panting with rage. "Here's this —— liar says he's been robbed here; that one o' my girls is a thief! He's trying to blast the character of my house"—and she poured such a volley of foul obscene names upon the object of her fury, as I had

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scarcely thought it possible for the tongue of man, much less of woman, to utter.

"But, *do* let me have *one* word with you," I whispered imploringly—"the poor girl up-stairs—her life is at stake"——

"Here, Moll, do you come and speak to the doctor! *I've* something else on my hands, I warrant me!" and turning abruptly from me, she plunged again into the quarrel which I had interrupted.

The young woman she addressed made her way out of the crowd—led me into a small filthy room at the back of the house, and civilly, but with some agitation, arising from her having taken a part in the dispute, asked me what I wanted. "Why, only to tell you that Miss Edwards is my patient—that I know her."

"Lord, sir, for the matter of that, so do a hundred others"——

"Silence, woman!" said I indignantly, "and listen to what I am saying. I tell you, Miss Edwards is my patient; that she is in dying circumstances; and I hold you all responsible for her safety. If she dies through being disturbed, or frightened in any way, recollect you will be placed in very serious circumstances, and I will witness against you!"

"I'm very sorry for the poor thing, sir—very!" she replied, as if startled by what I had said; "she's the quietest, civilest, best-behaved of any of our ladies, by far! What can we do, sir?"

"Keep the house quiet; do not let her be spoken to—and in an hour's time I shall send a proper woman to wait upon her."

"Lord, sir, but how's the poor creature to pay you and the woman too? She's been laid up, I don't know how long—indeed, almost ever since she's been here!"

"That *I* will see about. All I want from you is to attend to what I have told you. I shall call here early to-morrow morning, and hope to find that my wishes have been attended to. It will be a very serious business for you all, mind me, if they have not. If I do not find this hubbub cease instantly, I shall at my own expense engage a constable to keep the peace here. Tell this to the people without there. I know the magistrates at —— Street Office, and will certainly do what I say." She promised that all I had said should be attended to as far as possible; and I hurried from such a scene as it has not often been my lot to witness. I thanked God heartily, on quitting the house and neighbourhood, that I found myself once more in the open air, cold, dark, and rainy though it was. I breathed freely for the first time since entering within the atmosphere of such horrible contamination. A rush of recollections of Miss B——, once virtuous, happy, beautiful; now guilty, polluted, dying—of former and present times—overwhelmed my mind. What scenes must this poor fallen creature have passed through! How was it that, long ere this, she had not laid violent hands upon herself—that in her paroxysms of remorse and despair, she had not rushed from an existence that was hateful—hurried madly from the scene of guilt, into that of its punishment? I at once longed for and loathed a possible rehearsal of all. Full of such reflections as these, I found myself at the door of the dispensary. The hour was rather late, and it was not without difficulty that I could find such a person as I had undertaken to send. I prescribed the requisite remedies, and gave them to the nurse with all fitting directions, and despatched her to the scene of her attendance, as quickly as possible—promising to be with her as early as I could in the morning, and directing her to send for me without hesitation at any hour of the night, if she thought her patient exhibited any alarming symptoms. It was past eleven when I reached home. I told the reader a little while ago, that I knew I should break my promise—that I could not help informing my wife of what had happened. I need hardly say the shock gave her a sleepless night. I think the present the fittest opportunity for mentioning shortly to the reader, the circumstances

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under which we became first acquainted with the *soi-disant* Miss Edwards.

Several years before the period of which I have been writing, my wife's health required the assistance of change of scene and fresh country air. I therefore took her down, in the spring of the year, to what was then considered one of the fashionable watering-places, and engaged lodgings for her at the boarding-house of a respectable widow lady, a little way out of the town. Her husband had been a captain in the East India service, who spent his money faster than he earned it; so that, on his death, nothing but the most active exertions of numerous friends and relatives preserved his widow and daughter from little less than absolute destitution. They took for Mrs B—— the house she occupied when we became her lodgers, furnished it with comfort, and even elegance; and, in a word, fairly set her a-going as the proprietress of a boarding-house. The respectability of her character, and the comforts of her little establishment, procured for her permanent patronage. How well do I recollect her prepossessing appearance as it first struck me! There was an air of pensive cheerfulness and composure about her features, that spoke eloquently in her favour; and I felt gratified at the thought of committing my wife and family into such good hands. As we were coming down stairs after inspecting the house, through the half-open door of a back parlour, I caught a glimpse of an uncommonly handsome and elegantly dressed girl, sitting at a desk writing.

"Only my daughter, sir," said Mrs B——, observing my eye rather inquisitively peering after her.

"Dear!—how like she is to the pictures of the Madonna!" exclaimed my wife.

"Yes, madam. It is often remarked here," replied Mrs B——, colouring with pleasure; "and what's far better, ma'am, she's the best girl you'll meet with in a day's walk through a town! She's all I care for in the world!" she added with a sigh. We congratulated ourselves mutually; expressing anticipations of pleasure from our future intercourse. After seeing my family settled in their new quarters, I left for London—my professional engagements not allowing me more than a day's absence. Every letter I received from my wife contained commendations of her hostess, and "the Madonna," her beautiful, accomplished, and agreeable daughter, with whom she had got particularly intimate, and was seldom out of her company. The visits, "like angels', few and far between," that I was able to pay to ——, made Miss B—— as great a favourite with me as with my wife—as, indeed, was the case with all that knew or saw her. I found that she was well known about the place by the name of "the Madonna;" and was so much pestered with the usual impertinences of dandies, as to be unable to go about so much as she could have otherwise wished. The frank, simple-hearted creature was not long in making a confidant of my wife; who, in their various conversations, heard, with but little surprise, of frequent anonymous billet-doux, copies of verses, &c. &c., and flattering attentions paid by the most distinguished strangers; and, in one instance, even by Royalty itself. She had refused several advantageous offers of marriage, pressed upon her to a degree that was harassing, on the part of her mother, to whom she was passionately attached, and from whom she could not bear the thought of the most partial separation. Her education—her associations—her cast of character—her tastes and inclinations, were considerably beyond her present sphere. "I once should have laughed, indeed, at any one talking of my becoming the daughter of a lodging-house keeper," said the proud girl, on one occasion to my wife, her swan-like neck curving with involuntary hauteur, which, however, was soon softened by my wife's calm and steady eye of reproof, as she assured her—"Eleanor, *I* thought it no harm to be such a daughter." This pride appeared to my wife, though not to me, some

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security against the peculiar dangers that beset Miss B——.

"She's too proud—too high-spirited a girl," she would say, "to permit herself to tamper with temptation. She's infinitely above listening to nonsense. Trust me, there's that in her would frighten off fifty triflers a-day!"

"My view of the matter, Emily, is far different," I would say. "Pride, unless combined with the highest qualities, is apt to precipitate such a girl into the vortex that humility could never have come within sight or reach of. Pride dares the danger that lowliness trembles at and avoids. Pride must press forward to the verge of the precipice, to show the ease and grace of its defiance. My Emily! merely human confidence is bad—is dangerous—in proportion to its degree. Consider—remember what you have both heard and read of the disastrous consequences attendant on the pride of a disappointed girl!"

The predominant taste of Miss B—— was novel-reading, which engaged her attention every spare hour she could snatch from other engagements. Hence what could she imbibe but, too often, false sentiment—what gather but the most erroneous and distorted views of life and morals? Add to this the consciousness of her own beauty, and the involuntary tribute it exacted from all who saw her—the intoxicating, maddening fumes of flattery—ah me! I should have trembled for her indeed, had she been a daughter of mine! The dotting mother, however, seemed to see none of these dangers—to feel none of these apprehensions; and cruel, surely, and impertinent, would it have been in us to suggest them. For nearly three months was my wife a guest of Mrs B——'s, and a familiar—I might almost say an affectionate companion, of her beautiful daughter. On leaving, my wife pressed Miss B—— (the mother was, of course, out of the question) to pay her a speedy visit in town, and exacted a promise of occasional correspondence. Long after our return to London was "the Madonna" a subject of conversation, and many were the anxious wishes and hopes expressed by my wife on her behalf. Miss B—— did not avail herself of the invitation above mentioned, further than by a hasty passing call at our house during the absence of both of us. One circumstance and another — especially the increasing cares of a family—brought about a slackening, and at length a cessation, of the correspondence betwixt my wife and her friend "the Madonna," though we occasionally heard of her by friends recently returned from ——. I do not think, however, her name was once mentioned for about three years before the period at which this narrative commences.

Now, I suppose the reader can form some idea of the consternation with which I recognised in "Sally Edwards" the "Madonna" of a former day! The very watch-pockets at the back of our bed were the pretty presents of her whose horrid story I was telling my sobbing wife! I could have torn them from the bed-head, for the sake of their torturing associations! They would not let us sleep in peace. I was startled, during the night, from a doze rather than from sleep, by the sobs of my wife.

"What's the matter, Emily?" I asked.

"Oh!" she replied; "*what* has become of poor Mrs B——! Rely on it, she's dead of a broken heart!"

For two hours before my usual hour of rising, I lay awake, casting about in my mind by what strange and fatal course of events Miss B—— had been brought into the revolting, the awful circumstances in which I found her. Dreadfully distinct as was the last night's interview in my recollection, I was not wholly free from transient fits of incredulity. I *could* not identify the two — Eleanor B—— with *Sall Edwards!* All such notions, however, were dissipated by nine o'clock, when I found myself once more by the bedside of "Miss Edwards." She was asleep when I entered; and I motioned the nurse to silence, as I stepped noiselessly towards the chair she quitted to

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make room for me. Oh, God! how my heart ached on that occasion! Was the pitiable object before me Eleanor B——? Were they *her* fair limbs that now lay beneath the filthy bed-clothes? Was the ashy face—the hollow cheek—the sunken eye—the matted, disordered hair—did all these belong to Eleanor B——, the beautiful Madonna of a former and happier day! Alas for the black hair, braided so tastefully over the proud brow of alabaster, now clammy with the dews of disease and death, seen from amid the dishevelled hair like a neglected grave-stone, pressed down into the ground, and half overgrown with the dank grass of the churchyard! Alas for the radiant eye! Woe is me!—where is the innocent heart of past years? Oh, seraph! fallen from heaven into the pit of darkness and horror—how camest thou here!

Faint—vain attempt to embody in words some of the agitating thoughts that passed through my mind during the quarter of an hour that I sat beside my sleeping patient! Tears I did not—could not shed. My grief formed no other outlet than a half-smothered sigh—that ransacked, however, every corner of my heart. Everything about me wore the air of desolation and misery. The nurse, wearied with her night's watch, sat near me on the foot of the bed, drooping with drowsiness. The room was small, dirty, and almost destitute of furniture. The rain, seen indistinctly through the few dirty panes of glass, was pouring down as it had been all night. The wind continued to sigh drearily. Then, the house where I was—the receptacle of the vilest of the vile—the very antechamber of hell! When shall I forget that morning—that quarter of an hour's silence and reflection?

And thou, FIEND! the doer of all this—would that THOU hadst been there to see it!

A sudden noise made by the nurse woke Miss Edwards. Without moving from the posture in which she lay—on her side, with her face away from me—as she had slept, I found, nearly all the night—she opened her eyes, and after looking steadfastly at the wall for a few moments, closed them again. I gently took hold of her hand, and then felt her pulse. She turned her head slowly towards me; and, after fixing her eyes on me for an instant with an air of apathy, they widened into a strange stare of alarm, while her white face seemed blanched to even a whiter hue than before. Her lips slowly parted—altogether I protest my blood chilled beneath what I looked upon. There was no smile of welcome—no appearance of recognition—but she seemed as if she had been woke from dreaming of a frightful spectre, that remained visible to her waking eyes.

"Miss B——, Miss Edwards, I mean, how are you?" I inquired.

"Yes—it—it *is*"—she muttered, scarcely audible—her eye fixed unwaveringly upon me.

"Have you been in any pain during the night?" I continued.

Without removing her eyes, or making me any answer, she slowly drew up her right hand, all white and thin as it was, and laid it on her heart.

"Ah!" I whispered softly, partly to myself, partly to the nurse—"'tis the opium—not yet recovered from it." She overheard me, shook her head slowly—her eyes continuing settled on me as before. I began to wonder whether her intellects were disturbed; for there was something in the settled stare of her eyes that shocked and oppressed me.

"I thought I should never have woke again!" she exclaimed in a low tone, with a faint sigh. "Suicide! *hereafter!*" she continued to murmur, reminding me of the words with which I had quitted her over-night, and which no doubt had been haunting her disturbed brain all night long. I thought it best to rouse her gently from what might prove a dangerous lethargy.

"Come, come, you must answer me a few questions. I will behave kindly to you"——

"Oh, doctor ——!" exclaimed the poor girl in a reproachful tone, turning her head slowly away, as if she

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wondered I thought it necessary to *tell* her I would use her kindly.

"Well, well, tell me then—how are you?—how do you feel?—have you any pain in breathing? Tell me in the softest whisper you can."

"Alive, doctor—that's all. I seem disturbed in my grave! What has been done to me?—Who is that?" she inquired faintly, looking at the nurse.

"Oh! she has been sitting by you all night—she has been nursing you. I told you last night that I would send her to you!" Miss Edwards extended her hand towards the nurse, who gently shook it. "You're very kind to me," she murmured; "I—I don't deserve it."

"Every one, Miss Edwards, must be attended when they are ill. We want no thanks—it is our duty."

"But I am such a vile being"——

"Pshaw! you must not begin to talk in that way. Have you felt any fulness—a sort of choking fulness—about your chest, since I saw you last?" She did not seem to hear me, as she closed her eyes, and gave me no reply for several minutes. I repeated the question.

"I—I *can't* speak," she sobbed, her lips quivering with emotion.

I saw her feelings overpowered her. I thought it better to leave at once, and not agitate her; so I rose, and entreating the nurse to pay her all the attention in her power, and give her medicine regularly, I left, promising to return, if possible, at noon. Her state was extremely precarious. Her constitution had evidently been dreadfully shattered; everything, in short, was at present against her recovering from the injury her lungs had sustained from the ruptured vessel. The least shock, the least agitation of her exquisitely, excitable feelings might bring on a second fit of blood-spitting, and then all was over. I trembled when I reflected on the dangerous neighbourhood, the disgusting and disease-laden atmosphere she was breathing. I resolved to remove her from it, the instant I could do so with safety, to the dispensary, where cleanliness and comfort, with change of scene, and assiduous medical attendance, awaited her. My wife was very anxious to visit her, and contribute all in her power towards her double restoration of body and mind; but that, of course, was impossible, as long as Miss Edwards lay in —— Court.

I need not, however, delay the course of the narrative, by dwelling on the comparatively eventless week that followed. I attended my miserable patient twice, and sometimes even thrice a-day, and was gratified at finding no relapse; that she even recovered, though slowly, from the fierce and sudden attack that had been made on her exhausted constitution. During this time, as I never encouraged conversation, confining my inquiries to the state of her health, she said nothing either of interest or importance. Her mind was sunk into a state of the most deplorable despondency, evidenced by long, frequent, deep-drawn sighs. I learned from the nurse that Miss Edwards sometimes moaned piteously during the night—"O mother!—mother!—my mother!" She would scarcely open her lips from morning to night, even to answer the most necessary questions. On one occasion, I found she had opened a little purse that lay under her pillow, took out a solitary five-pound note, and put it unexpectedly into the nurse's hands, which she clasped at the same time within her own, with a supplicating expression of countenance, as if begging of her to retain the money. When she found that the nurse was firm in her refusal, she put it back into her purse in silence. "And your heart would have felt for her," said the nurse, "if you had seen her sad face!" I need hardly perhaps mention, that she had pressed the little relic of her wretched gains upon me in a similar manner, till she desisted in despair. On Friday morning, as I was taking my leave of her, she suddenly seized my hand, pressed it to her lips, and, with more energy than



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her feeble state could well bear, gasped —"Oh, that I could but get out of bed to fall down on my knees before you to thank you! Oh, it would relieve my heart!"

*Monday, October 15th.*—Yesterday morning I told Miss Edwards that I thought we might venture to remove her to our dispensary on the following day—an intimation she appeared to receive with indifference, or rather apathy. I also informed the infamous landlady of my intention, directing her to furnish me with whatever account she might have for lodging, &c. against my patient. Oh! how my soul abhorred the sight of, and sickened at speaking with that hideous bloated old monster! This morning I was at —— Court by ten o'clock. Finding nobody stirring about the door, passage, or stairs, I ascended at once to the room of Miss Edwards. As I was passing the landing of the first floor, I overheard, through a half-open door, the voices of persons conversing together. No apology can be necessary for stating that, on distinguishing the words "Sall Edwards," I paused for a moment to listen what plot might be hatching against her.

"I tell you, we'd better lose no time," said the voice of a man in a gruff under-tone; "we've been here shilly-shallying, day after day, to no purpose, all the week, till it's nearly too late. I know the —— keeps it always under her pillow."

"But that creature he has brought to stop with her," replied a female voice—that of the hateful harridan who owned the house; "what the —— are you to do with *her* the while?"

"Slap her face for her—knock her down and be off—that's my way of doing business. Do you remember old Jenkins, eh?"

There was a faint laugh.

"But why couldn't *you* go up, mother," said a female voice, "under pretence of making the bed, and so slip off with the purse? Now *that* would be doing it snug, as I calls it."

"Lord! *I* make the bed! You know how Sall hates me; and, besides, what's that woman up-stairs for but to make the bed, and suchlike? It won't do —no, it won't."

"Well—I suppose I *must*."

"Then again, Ikey—there's that d—— officious doctor of hers."

"Oh, of course, he's as much on the look-out after it as we is, for the matter of that! He's waiting to grab the blunt himself! *He* calls it his 'fee!' ha, ha! *We* makes no bones on it, but calls it plain robbery—don't we, mother?"

"But, mother," said a female voice I had not heard before, "remember poor Sall's dying."

"Well, slut," replied the old woman, "and what if she is? Then the loss of a few pounds can't signify, as she's a-going to the 'spensary, where they pays nothing."

"Well, well, mother," resumed the man's voice, "there's not a moment to be lost. I'd better do what I said."

I slipped like lightning down stairs —met nobody—hurried into the street, and instinctively ran towards the police office, which was close by. I soon procured the assistance of an officer, with whom I hastened back to —— Court. On our way I hurriedly explained to him the state of matters, and directed him to continue in Miss Edwards' room till she was removed to the dispensary. When we reached the outer door of the house, I suppose my well-known companion was instantly recognised; for a girl at the door, no doubt on the look-out to see if the coast was clear, no sooner set eyes on him than she rushed back into the passage, followed by the officer and me. As she was setting her foot upon the stairs, the powerful hand of the officer snatched her back again into the passage. She was on the point of shouting out, but he silenced her by fiercely shaking his staff in her face.

"Aha, my lass! Only speak a word, and I'll break your head open!" said he. "Doctor, do you go up at once; and I'll follow you before you've reached the door. I only want to keep this young woman quiet till then."

I sprang up-stairs in an instant. I

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met no one; but, on opening Miss Edwards' door, to my infinite alarm I beheld my usual seat by her bedside occupied by a burly ruffian of the lowest order. He seemed sitting quietly enough, though the nurse was speaking to him in great agitation. On my entering the room, he turned round; then suddenly thrust his hand beneath Miss Edwards' pillow, and made for the door, with a hasty air of defiance. Before he had reached it, the officer on the stairs had thrust it open.

"Stop that man—he has stolen something!" said I, in as low a tone as my alarm would allow me; and the officer instantly collared him.

"*I* stolen something, you——liar?" exclaimed the ruffian, in a low furious tone, turning towards me.

"Come—none o' that there jaw, Dick! Be quiet—be quiet, man!" and he presented to him a pistol ready cocked. "Now, will you come down with me quietly?—or will you be carried down with your brains blown out? Quick!"

His prisoner appeared preparing for a struggle.

"I'm sorry for the sick lady, sir," said the officer hurriedly to me; "'twill frighten her, but I *must* fire."

"For God's sake, avoid it if possible!" I gasped, in the utmost trepidation.

"Now, listen, Dick ——," said the officer, furiously tightening his grasp, till his bony knuckles seemed buried in the flesh of his prisoner—"if you stop a moment, d—— me, but I'll fire at you, come what may!" The pistol was almost touching his ear, and I turned away with horror, expecting every instant to hear the fatal report. I now heartily wished the fellow had taken all the money quietly off!

"Why—you devil! would you murder me!" shouted the prisoner, dropping into a passive attitude—"where's your warrant?"

"Here!" replied the officer, pressing his pistol against his prisoner's cheek—"off with you!"

"Oh, mercy! mercy! mercy!" shrieked the voice of Miss Edwards, whom the loud voice of the thief had awoke from the deep sleep procured by sedative medicines. She started suddenly up in bed, into a kneeling posture—her hands clasped together, and her face turned towards the group at the door with the wildest terror.

I hurried to her side, implored her to be calm, and told her it was nothing but a slight disturbance—that I would protect her.

"Mercy! mercy! murder! mercy!" she continued to gasp, regardless of all I could say to her. The officer had by this time prevailed on his prisoner to quit the room peaceably, calling to me to bolt the door after him, and stay in the room till he came back. In a few moments all was quiet again. I passed the next quarter of an hour in a perfect ecstasy of apprehension. I expected to see a second fit of blood-spitting come on—to hear the vile people of the house rush up to the door, and burst it open. I knew not what to do. I explained to Miss Edwards, as she lay panting in the bed, that the man who was taken off had entered the room for the purpose of robbing her of her five pounds.

"I saw—I saw his face!" she gasped—"they say—it is said—he murdered one of the"——. She could utter no more, but lay shaking from head to foot. "Will he come back again?" she inquired, in the same affrighted tone. By degrees, however, her agitation ceased, and, thank God!—(though I could not account for it)—there was no noise, no uproar heard at the door, as I had apprehended. I gave my patient a few drops of laudanum in water, to aid in quieting her system; and prayed to God, in my heart, that this fearful accident might not be attended with fatal consequences to her!

The drowsy effects of the laudanum were beginning to appear, when the officer, accompanied by another, gently knocked at the door for admission.

"He's safe enough now, sir, and we've secured the money," he whispered, as I met him half-way, with my finger on my lips.

"The hackney-coach, sir, is waiting at the door," said he in a low tone—

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"the coach you ordered from the dispensary, they say. I ask your pardon, sir, but hadn't you better take the lady away at once?—the sooner she leaves such a place as this, the better. There may be a disturbance, as these houses swarm with thieves and villains of all kinds, and there are but two of us here to protect you!"

"How is it," said I, "that the people of the house make no disturbance, that they let you take off your man so easily?"

"Lord, sir, they durstn't! They're all at home, but they know us, and durstn't show their faces. They know 'tis in our power to take them off to the office as accomplices if we like! But hadn't you better make up your mind, sir, about removing of her?"

"True." I stood for a moment considering. Perhaps his advice was the best; and yet, could she bear it after all this agitation? I stepped to the bedside. She was nearly asleep (our conversation had been carried on in the lowest whisper), and her pulse was gradually calming down. I thought it, on the whole, a favourable moment for at least making the attempt. I directed the nurse, therefore, to make the few necessary preparations immediately. In less than a quarter of an hour's time, we had Miss Edwards well muffled up, and wrapped in a large cloak belonging to the nurse. Her few clothes were tied up in a bundle; and the officer carried her down with apparently as much ease as he would have carried an infant. There was no noise, no hurry; and as the coach set off with us, I felt inexpressibly delighted that at all events I had removed her from the hateful situation in which I had found her. We had not far to go. Miss Edwards, a little agitated, lay quietly in the nurse's arms, and, on the whole, bore the fatigue of removing better than could have been expected. The coachman drove through the quietest streets he could find; and by the time we stood before the dispensary gates, Miss Edwards had fallen asleep—for, be it remembered, the influence of the recently given laudanum was upon her. On alighting, the nurse helped her into my arms. Poor creature! Her weight was that of a child! Though not a strong man, I easily carried her across the yard, and up-stairs to the room that had been prepared for her. When I had laid her on the bed, her short quick breathing and flushed features, together with her exhausted air and occasional hysteric starts, made me apprehensive that the agitation and excitement of the last hour or two had done her serious injury. I consoled myself, however, with the recollection, that under the peculiar exigencies of the case, we could have pursued no other or better course; and that my unhappy patient was now where she would receive all the attention that could possibly be paid to one in her melancholy situation. As I gazed at her, there seemed fewer traces than before of what she had been formerly. She looked more haggard—more hopelessly emaciated than I had before seen her. Still, however, I did not *despair* of in time bringing her round again. I prescribed a little necessary medicine, and, being much behind-hand with my day's engagements, left, promising to call, if possible, again in the evening. I comforted myself throughout the day with hopes of Miss Edwards' recovery, of her restoration even, in some measure, to society—ay, even of introducing once more into the fold this "tainted wether of the flock!"

[*Monday Evening to Saturday—inclusive.*]

Really there is something wonderful in the alteration visible in Miss Edwards! I am not the only one that thinks so. Some of her worst symptoms seem disappearing. Though she eats as little as ever, that little is eaten, she says, with some slight relish. Her voice is not so feeble as it was; the pain in her chest is not so oppressive; her spitting sometimes intermits; the fierce evening fever burns slacker; the wasting night-sweats abate a little. I am not, however, prematurely sanguine about her; I have seen too many of these deceitful rallyings to be easily deluded by them. Alas! I know too

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well that they may even be looked upon as symptomatic of her fatal disorder! But courage! *Nil desperandum, auspice* DEO; she is in THY hands—I leave her there in humble confidence; I bow to THY will!

Then again, may we not hope, in turn, to "minister" successfully "to the MIND diseased"—to cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff—which, not removed, will defy all the efforts of human art? Yes, let us hope, "though against hope"—for methinks there is stealing over her features an aspect of serenity of which they have long been stripped—there are signs of rejoicing in the desert—of gladness in the wilderness and solitary place, and of blossoming in the rose.

Rays of her former sweetness of temper and manner are perceptible—which, with the knowledge of her sufferings, endear her to all around her. She has so won upon the attentive affectionate nurse, that the faithful creature will not hear of her place being supplied by another.

"Well, Eleanor," said I to her this morning, "I'm delighted to find your pulse and tongue speak so well of you; that the nurse can bear witness to the good night's rest you have had! I don't hesitate to say, that if you go on in this way a little longer, I think I can hold out to you strong hopes of recovery!"

"Recovery!" she exclaimed with a deep sigh, shaking her head; "do you think I am glad to hear it?"

"Dear me!" exclaimed the nurse impatiently, "that's just the way the young lady keeps on with all the night and day through! I tell her 'tis wrong, doctor—isn't it?"

"'Tis *always* wrong, surely," I replied, with a serious air, "to be unthankful to the Almighty for his blessings, especially such as Miss Edwards has received."

"Ah, doctor, you wrong me! I wish you could read my heart, and then tell me how it beats with gratitude towards HIM I have so heavily offended! But why should I recover? What is there in life for *me*? Forgive me, if I say, Oh that Heaven, in its mercy, would let me die now! I am happy, yes, happy, in the prospect of death; but when I think of *life*, my joy fades suddenly!"

"Resign yourself, Eleanor, to the will of God! HE in his infinite wisdom must choose for you, life or death! Learn to obey, with fear and trembling."

"But how should I be otherwise than shocked at returning to the world—the scene of my horrible guilt—my black"—she paused, and turned pale. "Who would not spurn me with loathing? The worms would turn against me!—Even this kind woman"——

"La, ma'm—and what of *me*? Bless you! Do you think *I* hate you?" interrupted the honest nurse, with tears in her eyes.

"And, Eleanor—remember: did my *wife*, at any of the times she has been here"——

"No! no! no!" murmured the poor sufferer, her tears starting—and snatching my hand to her lips—"forgive me! but how can I help it!" * *

"Don't be distressed, Eleanor—if you should recover—about your future prospects," said I, as the nurse left the room—"there *are* ways of securing you a comfortable though perhaps a humble retreat! The bounty of one or two kind individuals"——

"Doctor—doctor"—she interrupted me; when her emotion would not suffer her to say more.

"Don't be oppressed, Eleanor—don't over-estimate a little kindness," said I, thinking she overrated the small services I spoke of—"It will be but little, and that little cheerfully given, among five or six persons—and those ladies"—her emotion seemed to increase. "Well, well—if you dislike so much the sense of obligation, why cannot you lighten the sense of it, by trying to contribute a little to your own support? Your accomplishments would easily admit of it."

"Dear doctor—you mistake me!" she interrupted, having regained a measure of calmness—"I could tell you a secret that would astonish you"——

"A secret!"—I echoed with a smile—"Why, what about?"

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"I will tell you," said she, looking towards the door, as if apprehensive of interruption. I rose and bolted it.

"I am at this moment—believe me, when I say it—worth £3000, and more than that; all—all at my absolute command!"

I stared at her, first with astonishment, then with incredulity, and finally with concern—thinking her intellects disordered. I shook my head involuntarily at her.

"Doctor—disbelieve me, if you choose," she continued calmly—"but I am serious. I do not speak, as you seem to imagine, deliriously—No, no! This sum of money is really mine—mine alone; and every farthing of it is in the funds at this moment!"

"Ah!" I interrupted her, the thought suddenly occurring to me, "your destroyer baited his hook splendidly."

All the colour that had mantled her cheeks vanished suddenly, leaving them white as marble. She gazed at me for a few moments in silence—the silence I knew not whether of sorrow or scorn.

"No," she replied at length, with a profound sigh, closing her eyes with her left hand, "*It* has never been polluted by *his* touch—or mine; it should perish if it had! No, no—it is not the price of my shame! Oh, doctor, doctor! am I then fallen so deeply, lower than I suspected even, in your estimation? Could you think I would have sold myself for MONEY!" She said this with more bitterness of tone and manner than I had ever seen in her.

"Well, Eleanor, be calm! Forgive me! I am very sorry I spoke so foolishly and hastily. I did not, however, dream of hurting your feelings, or attributing anything so base to you!" She continued silent. "Eleanor, don't you forgive me?" I inquired, taking her hand in mine.

"You have not offended me, doctor; you cannot," she replied, in tears. "It was the thoughts of my own guilt, my own infamy, that shocked me; but it is over! Oh, is it for such a vile wretch as me"—— She ceased suddenly, and buried her face in her hands.

"Doctor," at length she resumed, calmer, though in tears, "I say this large sum of money is mine—wholly mine. It came to me through the death of a cousin at sea, and was left me by my uncle. *They* knew not of the polluted hands it was to fall into!" Again she paused, overpowered with her feelings. "But though I knew it was become mine, could *I* claim it! A wretch like me? No; the vengeance of God would have blighted me! I have never applied for it; I never will! I have often been starving; driven to the most fearful extent of crime, scarce knowing what I was about; yet I never dared to think of calling the money mine! Guilty, depraved as I was, I hoped that God would view it as a penance, an atonement for my crimes! Oh, God! didst thou, wilt thou now accept so poor, so unworthy a proof of my repentance! Even in dust and ashes it is offered!"

She ceased. My soul indeed felt for her. Poor girl!—what a proof, though perhaps a mistaken one, was here of the bitterness, the reality, of her contrition and remorse! I scarce knew what reply to make to her.

"I have now, however, made up my mind how to dispose of it; in a manner which I humbly hope will be pleasing to God; and may He accept it at my hands! I wish"—— At this moment the returning footsteps of the nurse were heard. "To-morrow—to-morrow, doctor—a long history," she whispered hastily.

I took the hint, opened the door, and the nurse entered. Miss Edwards was much exhausted with the efforts she had made in conversation; and I presently took my leave, reminding her, significantly, that I should see her the next evening. Her concluding words led me to expect a narrative of what had befallen her; but unless she proved much better able than she seemed now to undertake such a painful task, I determined to postpone it.

The next evening convinced me that I had acted imprudently in suffering her to enter into any conversation on

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topics so harrowing to her feelings. I found she had passed a very restless disturbed night; and one or two painful symptoms reappeared during the day. I resolved, for a long time to come, to interdict any but medical topics; at least, till she could better sustain excitement. Acting on this principle, little of interest transpired during any of the almost daily visits I paid her for the long period of eleven weeks. I persevered in the most anxious efforts, which I also enjoined on all about her, to supply her mind with cheerful topics, in the shape, chiefly, of works of innocent entertainment, chess, sewing, &c., &c.; anything, in short, that could give her mind something to engage it, instead of preying upon itself.

But let me here make devout and thankful mention of the inestimable support and comfort she received in the offices of that best, nay, that only solace of the bed of sickness and death —RELIGION. Let me also bear testimony here to the honourable and unwearied exertions in her behalf made by the intelligent and pious chaplain of the institution. If he be now alive, and I have no reason for supposing he is not, I know he will feel that satisfaction in reflecting upon the services this narrative must call to his recollection, if he see it, which not even the most flattering and public acknowledgment can supply to him. He watched over her with a truly pastoral care, an untiring zeal, that found its reward in bringing her to a full sense of her mournful condition, and in softening her heart to the hallowing and glorious influences of Christianity. He was at her bedside almost every other day, during the long interval I have mentioned. She several times received the sacrament; and though she was more than once unexpectedly brought to the very margin of the grave, her confidence was not shaken. Truly, in the language of Scripture, "a new heart was given unto her." On one occasion of her receiving the sacrament, which she did with all the contrition and humility of Mary Magdalen of old, I heard from Mr —— that she was so overcome, poor girl, as that, in the very act of taking the cup into her hand, she burst out into hysteric weeping. The excitement increased; he described her features as wearing an expression of all but sublimity; and she presently burst into a strain of the most touching and passionate eloquence.

"Oh, Saviour of the world!" she exclaimed, her hands clasped in an attitude of devotion, and her eyes fixed upwards, "for my polluted lips to kiss thy blessed feet—that thou shouldst suffer me to wash them with my tears! Oh, to stand behind thee, to hear thee forgive me all! Yes, to hear thee speak! To feel that thou hast changed me! Thou hast gone into the wilderness; thou hast sought out the lost sheep, and brought it home with thee rejoicing! Let me never wander from thee again! My heart breaks with thankfulness! I am thine! Living or dying—do with me as thou wilt!"

Nor were such expressions as these the outpourings of mere delirium—rant, uttered in a transient fit of enthusiasm—but indications of a permanently altered state of feeling. Surely, call it what you will—enthusiasm, delirium, rant, canting—if it produce such effects as these, it must be blessed beyond all description; and, Father of the spirits of all flesh! vouchsafe unto *me*, when in the awful agonies of passing from time into eternity—into thy presence—oh, wilt thou vouchsafe to ME *such* enthusiasm, *such* delirium!

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The little attentions my wife paid Miss Edwards in calling with me to see her, and sending her, from time to time, such delicacies as her circumstances required, called forth the most enthusiastic expressions of gratitude. My pen can do no justice to the recollections that force themselves upon me, of her constant, overflowing thankfulness—of the peace and cheerfulness she diffused around her, by the unwavering serenity and resignation with which she bore her sufferings. She persisted in expressing her convictions

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that she should not recover; that she was being carried gently, not flung with headlong horror, into eternity. If ever a gloomy shadow would pass over her mind, and blanch her features, it was when her mind suddenly reverted to the dreadful scenes from which she had been so providentially rescued. The captive could not look back with wilder affright upon the tortures of the Inquisition, from which he was flying in unexpected escape, his limbs yet quivering with recollections of the rack!

It was an evening in March, in the ensuing year, that was appointed by Miss Edwards for communicating to me the particulars of her history—of her sufferings and her shame. She shrunk from the dreadful task—self-imposed though it was—saying, the only satisfaction she should experience in telling it, would be a feeling that it was in the nature of an expiation of her guilt. I had promised the preceding day to spend a long evening with her for the purpose of hearing her story. I arrived about half-past six o'clock, and the nurse, according to her instructions, immediately retired.

I wish the reader could have seen Miss Edwards as I saw her on that evening! She reclined, propped up by pillows, upon a couch that had been ordered for her, and which was drawn near the fire. In the beautiful language of Sterne, "affliction had touched her appearance with something that was unearthly." Her raven-black hair was parted with perfect simplicity upon her pale forehead; and the expression of her full dark eyes, together with that of her pallid wasted features, and the slender, finely-chiselled fingers of the left hand, which was spread open upon her bosom, reminded me forcibly of a picture of the Madonna, by one of the greatest old painters. I defy any person to have seen that unfortunate girl's face, even in total ignorance of her history, and to have easily forgotten it. On my entering the room, she laid aside a book she had been reading, and seemed, I thought, a little fluttered, aware of my errand—of the heavy task she had undertaken. I apprise the reader at once, that I fear I can give him but a very imperfect account of the deeply interesting narrative which I received from Miss Edwards' lips. I did not commit it to paper till about a week after I had heard it, circumstances preventing my doing it earlier. I have, however, endeavoured to preserve, throughout, as much of her peculiar turns of expression—sometimes very felicitous—as possible.

"Doctor," said she, speaking faintly at first, after answering a few of my usual inquiries concerning her health, "how I have longed for, and yet dreaded this day!" She paused, unable to proceed. I rung for a glass of water; and after she had taken a little, her agitation gradually subsided.

"Take time, Eleanor," said I gently—"don't hurry yourself.—Don't tell me a syllable more than is perfectly agreeable to yourself. Believe me—believe me, I have no impertinent curiosity, though I *do* feel a profound interest in what you are going to tell me."

She sighed deeply.

"But, doctor, the blessed Scriptures say, that if we *confess* our sins"—the poor girl's voice again faltered, and she burst into tears. I also was much affected, and embarrassed—so much so, that I hesitated whether or not I should allow her to go on.

"Forgive me, doctor," she once more resumed, "if I am shocked at finding myself beginning my bitter and disgraceful history. I do it in the spirit of a most humble confession of my errors. It will relieve my heart, though it may make you hate the poor fallen creature that is talking to you. But I know my days on earth are numbered."

"Eleanor! Don't say so; I assure you I have great hopes"——

"Doctor—forgive me," said she emphatically and solemnly, "I do not doubt your skill; but I shall never recover; and if it be the will of God, I would a thousand times rather die than live!—Oh, doctor! I find I must begin with the time when you saw me both happy and virtuous, living with my mother. How little did I then think

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what was before me!—how differently you were hereafter to see me! Perhaps I need scarcely tell you that my heart in those days was rank with pride—a pride that aided me in my ruin! My poor mother has often, I dare say, told you of the circumstances which led her to seek a livelihood by keeping a boarding-house at a summer watering-place. I *endured* the change of circumstances; my mother *reconciled* herself to them—and a thousand times strove, but in vain, to bend the stubborn heart of her daughter into acquiescence with the will of Providence. I concealed my rebellious feelings, however, out of pity to her; but they often choked me! They said, doctor, that at that time I was beautiful. Yes, doctor, look at me now," said she, with a bitter smile, "and think that I was once called beautiful! Beautiful!—oh! that this face had been the ugliest of the ugly—frightful enough to scare off the serpent!—But Heaven is wise! I am not vain enough to hesitate about owning that I saw how much I was admired—and admired sometimes in quarters that made my pulse beat high with ambitious hopes—hopes framed in folly, and to be, I need hardly say, bitterly disappointed. I read daily in the hateful novels which helped to unsettle my principles, of beauty alone procuring what are called high marriages; and would you believe, doctor—foolish girl that I was—I did not despair of becoming myself the wife of a man of rank—of wearing a coronet upon my brow!—Oh! my guilty heart aches to think of several worthy and respectable young men who honoured me with proposals I spurned with scorn—with insolence. If reason—if common-sense had guided me—had I rather listened to the will of Heaven, uttered through the gentle remonstrances and instructions of my poor mother—I might have been, to this hour, a blooming branch upon the tree of society, and not a withered bough soon to fall off—but not, oh no, my gracious God and Father!—not into the burning!" exclaimed Miss Edwards, her voice faltering, and her eyes lifted up towards heaven with a kind of awful hope.—"I need not weary you with describing the very many little flattering adventures I met with—too often, alas! to allow of the common duties of life being tolerable to me. Mrs ——, doctor," mentioning my wife, "in happier times, would listen to them, and warn me not to be led away by them.

* * * *

"But let me come at once to the commencement of my woes. You may recollect the pleasant banks of the ——? Oh, the happy hours I have spent there! I was walking, one Sunday evening, along the river side, reading some book—I now forget what—when I almost stumbled against a gentleman that was similarly engaged. He started back a step or two, looked at me earnestly for a moment, and, taking off his hat with a high-bred air, begged my pardon. He looked so hard at me, that I began to fancy he knew me. I coloured, and my heart beat so violently that I could scarcely breathe; for I should, indeed, have been blind not to see that my appearance struck him; how *his* affected *me*, let the remainder of my life from that hour tell in sighs and groans of anguish! He was the handsomest man I think I have ever seen. He seemed about thirty years old. There was something about his face that I cannot express, and his voice was soft—his manners were kind and dignified. Indeed, indeed, it was the hour of fate to me! He said something about 'blaming not each other for the interruption we had experienced, but the authors whose works kept us so intently engaged,' in such a gentle tone, and his dark eyes looking at me so mildly, that I could not help listening to him, and feeling pleased that he spoke to me. I begged that he would not blame himself, and said he had done nothing to apologise for. He said not another word on the subject, but bowed respectfully, and talked about the beautiful evening—the silence—the scenery—and in such language! so glowing, so animated, so descriptive, that I thought he must be a poet.

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All the while he was speaking, there was a diffident distance about him—a sort of fear lest he was displeasing me, that charmed me beyond what I could express, and kept me rooted to the spot before him.

"'I presume, madam, as you are so fond of water-side scenery,' said he, 'you often spend your evenings in this way?'

"I replied that I often certainly found my way there.

"'Well, ma'am,' said he, with a sweet smile, 'I cannot think of interrupting you any longer. I hope you will enjoy this lovely evening.'

"With this he took off his hat, bowed very low, and passed on. If he had but known how vexed I was to see him leave me! I felt fascinated. I could not help looking behind me to see him, and, to be sure, caught him also looking towards me. I would have given the world for a decent pretence for bringing him to me again! My heart beat—my thoughts wandered too much to admit of my reading any more; so I closed my book, sat down on the white roots of a great tree that overshadowed the river, and thought of nothing but this strange gentleman. I wondered who he was—for I had never seen him before in the place—and teased myself with speculations as to whether he really felt towards me anything further than towards a mere stranger. I went home. I sat down to the piano, where I began twenty different things, but could finish none of them. My mother wished me to write a letter for her; I obeyed, but made so many mistakes that she got angry, and wrote it herself after all. All night long did I think of this fascinating stranger. His soft voice was perpetually whispering in my ear; his bright piercing eyes were always looking at me. I woke almost every half-hour, and began to think I must be surely, as they say, *bewitched*. I got quite alarmed at finding myself so carried away by my feelings. Can you believe all this? You may call it love at first sight—anything you choose. Would to Heaven it had been *hatred* at first sight! That evening fixed a spell upon me. I was driven on I do not know how. I could not help taking a walk the next evening. It was nonsense—but I must needs take my book with me. My heart beat thick whenever I saw the figure of a gentleman at a distance; but I was disappointed, for he whom I looked for did not come that evening. The next evening and the one after that, wretched fool that I was! did I repair with a fluttering heart to the same spot—but in vain; the stranger did not make his appearance. On the Sunday evening, however, I unexpectedly met him, arm in arm with another gentleman. Gracious Heaven! how pale and languid he looked, and his right arm in a sling! He bowed—smiled rather pensively at me—coloured a little, I thought—and passed me. I found soon afterwards that a duel had been fought in the immediate neighbourhood, on Tuesday last, the day but one after the meeting I have described, between a Lord —— and Captain ——, in which the latter was wounded in the arm. Yes; then there could be no doubt it was Captain —— whom I had talked to. And he had been in a duel! Oh, doctor, I dropped the newspaper which told me the circumstance. I trembled—I felt agitated, as if he had been not a stranger, but a relative. There was no concealing the truth from myself. I felt sick and faint at the thought of the danger he had been exposed to; and such an interest in him altogether as I could not describe. Doctor—fool, wretched, weak fool that I was—already I loved him. Yes, an utter stranger—one who had never even given me a look or word beyond the commonest complaisance! The absurd notions I had got from novels came into my head. I thought of *fate*, and that it was possible our feelings were mutual, with much more nonsense of the same sort. I was bewildered all day, and told my mother I felt poorly. Poor, good, deceived mother! she was for having *advice* for me!

"Two or three evenings after, we met again. My heart melted to see his pale features, his languid air. Some-

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how or another—I forget how—we got again into conversation; and I at once taxed him with having fought a duel. What, oh what could have prompted me? He blushed, and looked quickly at me, with surprise but not displeasure, saying, in a low tone, something or other about his 'pride at being an object of my sympathy.' Doctor ——, I can but again and again ask you to bear with me in this history of my guilt and folly! Before we parted, I was actually imprudent enough to accept his arm. We often met at that spot afterwards, and by appointment. I was enchanted with my new companion, there was something so elegant, so fashionable, so refined about him. I found he was an officer in a regiment of cavalry, and staying at ——, on account of ill health. He must have been blind, indeed, not to have seen that I doated—yes, sigh, doctor!—that I doated upon him; but when I was one evening infatuated, mad enough, to beg him *not to appear to know me*, if he should happen to meet me walking with my mother, or any one else, you will surely believe that I must have been possessed by Satan! The moment the fatal words were out of my mouth, I snatched my arm out of his, started back, and turned very pale and faint. I am sure I must—for he instantly asked me with alarm if I was ill. Ill! I was ready to sink into the earth out of his sight! His winning ways, however, soon made me forget all—forget even, alas, alas! that I now stood fatally committed to him! When I returned home, I felt oppressed with a guilty consciousness of what I had done. I could not look my mother in the face. I felt stupefied at recollecting what I had said, but with great effort concealed all from my mother. It is needless to say that after this Captain —— and I met on the footing of lovers; I expecting him, on each occasion, to propose marriage; and he walking by my side, talking in a strain that set my soul on fire with passionate admiration for him. What a charming, what a delightful companion! Forgetting, for a moment, all the nonsense of novels, I felt I could have adored him, and made him my husband, had he been the poorest of the poor! When he was not with me, he would write me sometimes two or three letters a-day, which he contrived to send me without their falling under my mother's notice—and such letters! If you—even you, had seen them, you would have owned how unequal was the struggle! At length I felt piqued at his hesitation, in not saying something decisive and satisfactory on the subject that was nearest my heart; but on the very morning when I thought I had made up my mind to tell him we must part, for that I should get myself talked of in the town, and alarm my mother—he saved me all further anxiety, by telling me, in enthusiastic terms, that he felt he could not live without me, and asked me if I had any objection to a private marriage; adding that his father was a haughty, selfish man, and all the other falsehoods that have ruined—and alas, alas! will *yet* ruin, so many wretched girls! Woe, woe, woe is me that I listened to them —that I believed all—that, indeed, Captain —— could have scarce said anything I would not have believed! I must have been, alas! given over to destruction not to understand—never once to reflect on the circumstance of his refusal ever to come to our house to see my mother, or allow me to breathe a hint about what had passed between us! Alas, had but a daughter's heart glowed with a thousandth part of the love towards her mother, with which that mother's yearned towards *her*—a moment's sigh—an instant's confidence—would have broken the charm—would have set me free from the spoiler! 'I must keep my old father in the dark about this matter, as you your mother, Eleanor,' said he, 'till the marriage is over, and then they cannot help themselves!' He talked to me in this strain for nearly a month; for my better angel helped me to fight against him so long—flashing incessantly before me the figure of my poor, precious, heart-broken mother ——and I refused to listen to his proposals. But at last he prevailed.

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He talked me to death on the subject; persuaded me that if I would elope, I could leave a letter, telling my mother how soon she would see me the wife of Captain ——; and at last I began to think in the same way.

"'Dear, dear Captain ——! How much I am trusting to you!' said I one night, weeping, after he had wrung a reluctant consent from me. 'Oh, don't—don't bring down my poor mother's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave!'

"'My dear, sweet, good girl!' he exclaimed, folding me fondly in his arms, and kissing me in a sort of transport. I felt then confident of my safety! That very evening did I write the proposed letter to my mother, telling her of all. Oh, how I tried to crowd my whole heart into every word! My colour went and came—my knees shook—my hands trembled—my head swam round—I felt cold and hot by turns. I got the letter written, however, and stepped into bed—a sleepless one, you may imagine. That night—that very night—I dreamed a dream that might have saved me: that I looked out of bed and saw a beautiful but venomous snake gliding about under the chest of drawers, near the windows. It shocked me as I gazed shudderingly at it, but I did not once think of Captain ——. Alas, I have since!

"The next day, my injured, unsuspecting mother had fixed for paying a visit to a friend who lived some few miles off, whence she would not return till the day after. Monster—monster—perfidious creature that I was! I chose the first night that my mother and I had been separated for years—the time when she had left all in my care—to forsake her and home, to elope at midnight with my destroyer in a coach-and-four for Gretna Green! We set off—oh that horrible night—that"——Here Miss Edwards turned suddenly deadly pale. Her manner had for some time shown increasing agitation, though she spoke with undiminished energy till she uttered the last words.

"I cannot suffer you to proceed any further this evening, Eleanor," said I, forcing some water to her lips, "your efforts have exhausted you."

She nodded, and attempted to speak, but her voice failed her.

"To-morrow shall I come, if you find yourself better?" She nodded acquiescence. I called in the nurse immediately, ordered some little quieting medicine for Miss Edwards, and left the nurse to prepare her for bed.

I have omitted much that she told me—much that might have added to the powerful effect her simple and touching mode of telling it might have produced upon the reader, had I given it entire—lest I should fatigue his attention.

The next evening found us again together as on the preceding. I entreated her not to resume her narrative, if it were painful to her—observing her in tears when I entered.

"Yes, doctor—indeed I am pained; but let it ring my heart as it may, I must go on with the black story I have commenced. Do but be prepared to hear with forgiveness much that will shock you—that will make you look on me with loathing—no, no then—I will say pity!

"I cannot pain you with a particular account of the means by which my destroyer succeeded in effecting my ruin. Once in the accursed travelling-carriage, we went, I afterwards found, in a far different direction to that of Gretna Green. I think I must have been mad throughout the journey. I recollect nothing distinctly; all seems yet in a mist—a mist of excitement, of mingled apprehension and delight. Captain —— was all tenderness, all persuasion. He kept me in a constant whirl. He never suffered me to be left alone for an instant—to think of what I was doing. No—*that* was not his plan! For two days, I do not think I had leisure to look back and reflect on what I had left. I felt—strange, dreadful to say—no uneasiness. Oh, my very heaven was to be in the company of Captain ——, to look at him, to hear him speak to me, to think he was now

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mine, *mine* for life! But on the morning of the third day"—here she shuddered from head to foot, and paused—"I awoke in a fright; for I had been dreaming about the serpent I had dreamed of before we eloped. Then it glided about under the drawers, at a distance; *now* it was writhing about on the very bed on which I lay! The vividness of my dream awoke me, as I said, in horror. Alas, my eyes were opened! BESIDE me lay the serpent!

"I shrieked aloud—I sprung out of bed—I tore my hair with frantic gestures. He leaped out after me in consternation, and attempted to pacify me, but in vain. My cries brought an elderly, respectable female into the room. He told her that 'his wife' was only in hysterics—that I was unfortunately subject to them. I recollect nothing more distinctly of that dreadful day. By the next, with Belial cunning and persuasion, he had soothed and flattered me into something like my former insensibility to my situation. I felt as if it were useless to resist his influence! Before the week was over we were in Paris. Not all the myriad gaieties of that place, however, could lull or distract the worm from gnawing at my heart! For three weeks I was incessantly in tears—often in hysterics. Captain —— behaved to me with exquisite tenderness. He spent immense sums in procuring me amusement; and, in a month longer, I found, spite of myself, my sorrow wearing off. He had accustomed me gradually to wine, and at length he was obliged to check my increasing propensity to it with anger. Once—once only, do I recollect having mentioned the sacred name of my mother. He presently produced me a letter, which he pretended to have received from a friend at ——, where I had lived; which said that my mother, on finding out what I had done, burnt the letter I had left for her—cursed me, called me by an infamous name, and vowed solemnly never to receive or acknowledge me again. How I recollect one sentence he read me!

"'The old woman goes on much as usual, only very furious when her daughter's name is mentioned. She says, as the slut has made her bed, so she must lie upon it!'

"How—oh, how could I be for an instant deceived by such a shallow—such an infamous fabrication? I know not; strange as it may seem, I *wished* to think it true, to pacify myself—to blunt the horrid sting of remorse. The devil, too, had blinded me!

"From that time, I began to find my feelings dulled, and got in a manner SATISFIED with my situation! I had talked about *marriage* till he almost struck me in his fury; and I got wearied and frightened out of my importunities. We spent some time on the banks of the beautiful Rhine, and travelled over the most delicious parts of Switzerland; after which we returned again to Paris. Altogether, we spent about seven months in France. Towards the latter part of that time, stupefied as I was, I discovered a gradual but melancholy change in his manner towards me. He seemed trying, I thought, to disgust me with him! He introduced to our table some English friends of his, noblemen and others, and did not seem to care how pointedly they paid their attentions to me, nor how I received them. Then he began to get piqued at 'my impropriety,' he said. That gave him a handle of offence against me. Our life was thenceforth one of incessant bickering. He began to talk about his leave of absence having expired—that he must return to England. He told me, at length, abruptly, that he had but ten days longer to continue in France, as his regiment was unexpectedly ordered off for India, and I must return to England with him instantly. Return to England! The thought was horror! The day before that fixed for our return to England, I eloped with Lord ——, an extravagant, dissipated, but handsome young man; and we bent our course towards Rome. There I did indeed blazon my shame. I was allowed whatever dress—whatever ornaments, I chose to order. I quite shone in jewellery—till

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I attracted universal attention. Alas, too well I knew the answer given to the perpetual inquiry—'Who is she?' Bear with me, kind doctor, bear with me in my guilty story, when I tell you that in less than three months I quitted Lord ——, for the society of an Italian nobleman; his, for that of a French Count—and there I shall pause.

"Within two years of my first arrival in France, I found myself in Paris—alone. Ill health had considerably changed my appearance, and of course unfitted me, in a measure, for the guilty life I had been leading. My spirits had fallen into the lowest despondency; so that Sir ——, the man with whom I had last lived, quitted me in sudden disgust, with not more than a hundred pounds in my pocket, to manage as I could for myself.

"I lived alone at Paris for nearly three weeks, doing little else than drink wine and take laudanum. Then I began to long for England, though I dreaded to see it. The flutter of my heart almost choked me when I thought of home.

"Restless as an evil spirit, I knew not what to do with myself, or whither to go. Still something drew me to England, and accordingly I abruptly left France, and arrived at London in December. In the packet, I happened to meet a gentleman I had often seen at Captain ——'s table. Careless and stupefied, I heeded not what I did; so he had but little difficulty in persuading me to accept his lodgings in London as mine. I lived with him about a month. Is not all this frightful, doctor?" exclaimed Miss Edwards abruptly. I shook my head, and sighed.

"Yes!" she resumed, echoing my sigh from the very depths of her bosom, "it is an awful catalogue of crime indeed; but let me hasten through it, doctor, while I have strength, for I sicken with the story.

"When I was left alone in London, my spirits grew more and more depressed. I felt sinking into what is called melancholy madness. I went one evening to Drury-Lane Theatre, almost stupefied with wine, which I had been drinking alone, for I should really have destroyed myself but for the excitement of wine. I need hardly say to what part of the boxes a young woman, elegantly dressed, and alone, was ushered. It was that allotted to my miserable sisters in guilt. I sat at the corner of the boxes, a large shawl almost concealing me from head to foot. The orchestra was playing the overture. Oh, how sick, how faint that music made me, which all others listened to with ecstasy! It was of a pensive description, sad, but sweet beyond imagination; and it affected me so powerfully that I was obliged to rush from the place, and seek fresh air. I returned in about half an hour. The vast house had completely filled while I was away; all was light and splendour; and the merry audience was shaking with laughter at the scenes of a favourite comedy. I—*I* could not laugh, but rather scream with the agonising intensity of my feelings.

"'La, how she sighs! Mighty fine, to be sure,' exclaimed a rude wretch that sat beside me, glaring in finery. My heart drooped under the insult. I could not resent it. I gazed languidly at the happy people occupying the private boxes. How I envied them! In casting my eye round them, it fell on a party in that nearest but one to me. Gracious God! it was Captain —— with three ladies, one of them very beautiful; and he was paying her the most anxious attentions.

"I remember no more till I found myself, early in the morning in bed at my lodgings, attended by a girl in fine clothes. I then found, on inquiry, that I had suddenly fallen back on the floor of the boxes in a swoon, and was immediately carried out, attended by a girl that sat near me, who, having found by a paper in my pocket where I lived, brought me home. The woman of the house insisted on my quitting it immediately. I owed her no rent; 'But that was all one,' she said: 'I was a slut, and must be off!' The girl I spoke of refused to leave my room till I had a little recovered, and easily persuaded me to accompany her to her lodgings. I had about £30 with me, and a few articles

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of elegant and expensive dress. I lay in bed at my new residence for two days, without once rising; and no words can tell the horror that was upon me! At the end of that time my companion prevailed upon me to accompany her to the play, whither, half intoxicated, I went. But I cannot pause over the steps by which I hurried on to the vilest excesses of infamy. My money exhausted—all the dress, except what I wore, pawned—what was to become of me? With the wages of shame and sin, I strove madly to drink myself to death; yes, doctor, to death! I tried to live hard, that my health might fail—that I might die, if it were the death of a dog. I was soon obliged to leave my companion in guilt. She was more dreadfully addicted to drinking even than I; and in one of her sudden frenzies abused me, and at last struck me a blow with a decanter, that felled me in an instant, stunned and bleeding, to the floor. See, doctor, I have the mark of it!" said Miss Edwards, pushing aside her hair, and disclosing a large scar over the corner of her left forehead.

"You may wonder, doctor, that I have said so little about my mother; but must not suppose that I *thought* little of her. Her injured image was always before my eyes, and served but to drive me into deeper despair. My own shame and misery were tolerable indeed, when I thought of what *her* sufferings must be! I never dared to make any inquiries about her. How, indeed, could I? Suddenly, however, I resolved, I knew not why—for the thought came over me like a flash of lightning—to go down to ——, come what would—to see her, if possible, in disguise, without her knowing me. I exchanged my gay clothes with a poor woman of the town for her wretched rags; painted my face, concealed all my hair under my bonnet; and, with little more than money enough to pay my coach-hire down—careless about the means of coming up—got upon the —— coach by night.

"It rained, and blew cruelly cold—but I had no umbrella—no protection against the inclement weather, but an old worn-out cloak, that was comparatively useless to me. No one on the coach—indeed there were but three besides myself—would speak to such a wretched object as I looked, or offer me additional clothing! By five o'clock in the morning of the 10th of February 18—, at about two miles' distance from the town, I told them to set me down. I was so numb with cold that I could scarcely keep my feet, till I found my way to a very small alehouse by the road-side, where I called for gin, and drank off two glasses of it. Indeed, by the way, you would be horrified to know how I had accustomed myself to the use of raw spirits! Without waiting, I hastened onward. It was dark and dismal, truly. The rain, and the bitter wind, chilled my very heart within me, but I saw—felt—heard—thought of nothing but my wretched—my heartbroken mother. It was nearly seven o'clock when I entered the town. How my guilty, wearied heart beat, as I recognised the places about me! How sick the sight of them made me! I drew my bonnet over my face—fearful lest, disguised as I was, I should by any chance be recognised—and skulked, like a thief, towards the street in which our house stood. I was often obliged to stop and lean against the walls and railings, to rest my aching limbs. At length I neared the dreaded spot. I looked—I strained my eyes, till they ached. Alas! what had once been *our* house, was now a shop, newly painted, with a strange name in great glaring gold letters over the bow-window. Oh, my God! what feelings shot through my quivering heart at that moment!—I sat down upon the wet steps of a house nearly opposite. I wrung my hands—I bit my lips with the intensity of my anguish—for I was afraid of alarming the yet sleeping neighbourhood with a shriek. At length an old man came slowly past, leading a horse. I asked him, with a faltering voice, where Mrs —— (my mother) lived? He was deaf—and I was obliged to shout the name into his ear—though the effort seemed to exhaust all the little breath I had.

"'Oh—Mrs——?—why—let me

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see! Her whose daughter ran off with the officer some time since?'

"I nodded, though my eyes could no longer distinguish the person I was speaking to.

"'Why—poor old lady—she's been dead this year and a half'——

"I heard no more. I did not faint—I did not fall—I did not utter a sound—but while he was speaking, walked away steadily and rapidly. My body seemed to swell as I went on. I felt as if I hardly touched the ground. Strange lights were before my eyes. My head seemed whirling round and round. As I walked in this strange way, a coach passed me. I stopped it—found it was going up to London, and got on at once.

"'Going all the way up to London, young woman?' said the gruff guard.

"I told him I was—and spoke not a word more, till we reached the coach-office in London. I had no money about me except a shilling or two, and the fare was a pound. They helped me off the coach; and when they found I could not pay my fare, abused me dreadfully—called me an impostor—and handed me over to a constable, who took me to the police-office as a swindler. The magistrate, who was just leaving, soon disposed of the case. The coachman made his charge; and the magistrate sternly inquired how I dared to act so dishonestly? I fell down on my knees, scarce knowing where I was, or what I was doing. He looked hard at me, and seemed to pity me.

"'Is it worth while to follow up proceedings against such a wretched creature as this?' he said, and flung me a small piece of silver. I fell down at full length on the floor, with a faint scream; and was, in an hour or two, sent off to the hospital. There I lay for six weeks, ill of a brain fever, which had several times nearly put an end to my wretched existence. When I was discharged, I had nothing to put on, and no home to go to. At the same time, another young woman left the hospital; who, seeing my utter destitution, invited me home with her, for at least a day, till I could turn myself about. She conducted me to a regular house of infamy! I wrote immediately to a gentleman, who had promised to send me money whenever I asked him. It was my first application, and was successful. He sent me £10 immediately, begging me not to write to him any more. Shall I go on?

"With part of this sum I purchased gay clothes, and commenced—yes, the accursed life of a common prostitute! I seemed altogether changed since my visit to ——, and my illness in the hospital. My poor mother now dead—murdered—murdered by her vile daughter—I had scarce a relation in England that I knew of. Society, I was shut out from for ever. I lived in a state of mind that I cannot describe; a sort of calm desperation — quite indifferent of what became of me—often wishing that I might drop down dead in the streets. I seldom passed three hours in the day sober; every farthing of money I could procure was instantly changed for the most scorching *spirits!* But I will not torture you with describing the life I led for a year after this; it was that of a devil! A few things, however, I may mention. As I was standing at the box entrance of the theatre one night, in company with several other women like myself, I unexpectedly saw Captain ——, handing a splendidly dressed lady out of a carriage. Without my wishing it—before, indeed, I was aware of it—his eye fell upon me, and he knew me. He turned ghastly pale; and was obliged to return back into the carriage with the lady, his wife I suppose, and drive home. Perhaps he thought I should make myself known; but no—I turned fainter far than he, and staggered away to some steps on which I sat down to recover myself. By means of a Court Guide, which, by some accident or other, found its way into my hands, I soon afterwards found out where he lived. I often went, late at night, when it was dark and wet, so that no one seemed likely to be stirring, and paced to and fro

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before the large house where he lived, with feelings none can tell. How often has my heart's fluttering half-choked me, while I have listened to the sound of the piano in the drawing-room! No doubt, thought I, his wife is playing to him, and he is leaning over her seat looking at her fondly! Oh! the hours—the nights I have passed in this wretched way! I thought myself more like a fiend haunting him, than anything human. And yet, dreadfully as he had injured me, I would have died before I could have annoyed him! And, doctor, I have done the same often towards another house in London. There, also, have I paced for hours—bitter hours—and that house was *yours!*" She burst into tears, and was several minutes before she could resume her narrative. I suggested that I would hear her proceed with her history at some future day—but she told me it was now nearly over. At length she resumed.

"I once walked several streets after you and Mrs ——, and felt as if I could have kissed the ground you walked on. I dared not draw near, lest I should pollute you—lest I might, horrid creature, be seen and recognised; and when I lost sight of you, I had nothing for it but to hurry home, and drown my agony in drink. Did you never hear of my elopement, doctor, before now?" she inquired abruptly. I answered that I had not; that as the air did not suit my wife, we never went again to ——; and that after she and Miss Edwards had ceased corresponding, the pressure of domestic and professional engagements prevented our inquiring after her. She sighed, and proceeded.

"I have often seen in places of amusement, and in the streets, some of the persons to whom Captain —— introduced me in France, but they either could not, or would not, recognise me—and I never attempted to remind them of me. At length, however, even liquor was insufficient to keep up my spirits. I wandered about the streets—I herded with the horrible wretches about me—as if I was only half aware of what I did and where I was. I would have lived alone—but I dared not! The most dreadful thoughts assailed me. The guilt of my past life would often gleam back upon me in a way that almost drove me mad, and I have woke a whole house with my moanings! To occupy my thoughts, when obliged to be alone, I used to send for the papers, in one of which, while carelessly casting my eyes over the list of deaths, I saw the name of my cousin, by which I knew at once that I was entitled, as I told you before, to the sum of £3000. I instantly determined never to touch it—never to apply for it. I felt I had no business with it; that the dead would shake in their graves if I stretched out my hands towards it. Once I saw my name at the head of an advertisement, stating that by applying somewhere or other I should hear of something to my advantage! I had resolved, in my own mind, to leave the whole, when I died, to a particular charity, on condition that they would not allow my name to be known. You can guess the charity I mean, doctor?" She paused, as if waiting for an answer.

"The Magdalen Hospital?" said I, in a low tone.

"Yes," she replied with a sigh—"but to return, doctor, let me now tell you of a dreadful circumstance, marking indeed the hand of Providence, which occurred only about six months before the period when you first saw me at —— Court. As I was walking, about five o'clock in the afternoon, in Oxford Street, miserable as I always was, both at home and abroad, I heard a sudden shout of alarm in the street; and on turning round, saw everything clearing hastily out of the way of a horse galloping along like lightning towards where I stood, its rider evidently almost falling from his seat. As I stood near one of the cross-streets, the horse suddenly shot past me, round the corner, and, frightful to tell, in the act of turning round,



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swift as light, being, I suppose, startled by some object or other, threw its unfortunate rider over its head with stunning force, against a high iron pump, and galloped off, faster than before. A crowd, of course, collected instantly about the sufferer; and I could not help joining it, to find out whether or not the gentleman was killed. The crowd opened suddenly in the direction in which I stood, making way for two men who were carrying their stunned and bleeding burden to a doctor's shop close by. He was quite motionless, and the blood pouring from his head. The sight made me, you may suppose, sick and faint, but"—she paused—"Doctor," she continued with a gasp, her face blanching with the recollection, "a glance at the countenance, half covered with blood though it was, showed me the features of Captain ——!" Here Miss Edwards again became exceedingly agitated, trembling from head to foot, and continuing deadly pale. I also felt deeply shocked at the incident she had been telling. At length, in a broken and rather indistinct tone, she proceeded, "I shrieked at the spectacle, and swooned, and was helped by some bystanders to an adjoining shop, which it was nearly an hour before I could leave, in a hackney coach, for my lodgings. I never recovered the shock of that terrible occurrence. The next day's newspaper, which you may believe I bought with sickening apprehension, announced that Captain —— had been killed on the spot, and that his heart-broken widow was within only a few days of her confinement.

"The moment I recognised the bleeding body, as I have told you, a strange pain shot across my breast. I felt—I knew it was my death-stroke—I knew I had not long to live—that the destroyer and his victim would soon be once more within the dreadful sight of each other!—My health and spirits—if it is not a mockery to call them such, soon broke down altogether; every night was I scared with the spectre of Captain ——, every day tortured with the recollections of his bleeding corpse, and the horrid associations of my past and present guilt!—Unable to follow my foul, revolting line of life as before, I wandered like a cursed spirit, from one house of infamy to another, each worse than the former—frequently beaten with cruel violence, half-starved, and sometimes kicked out of doors into the street, because I would not *work!*—Twice have I been dragged disgracefully before a magistrate, on false accusations of robbing the vile wretch that owned the house in which I lived!—I have lodged in places that were filthier than hog-sties; I have heard robberies planned—and have listened with silent horror to schemes for entrapping the innocent of both sexes to their destruction. Once—once only, I dared a whisper of remonstrance—and it earned me a blow from the old Jewess with whom I lived, that stretched me senseless on the floor, amid the laughter and derision of the wretches around us. Pressed by horrid want, I have plied the detestable trade I exercised, and been compelled to smile and caress those who chose to call for me—to drink with them—at the moment when my heart was dying within me! when I felt that consumption was working deeper and deeper into my vitals!

"About three weeks before you saw me, I happened to be prowling about the streets, when my haggard appearance struck a gentleman who was passing by on horseback. He eyed me earnestly for some moments, and then suddenly dismounted, and gave his horse into the hands of his servant. He had recognised me—spite of the dreadful alteration in my appearance—told me he had known me in what he called, alas! my 'earlier and better days'—and I recognised in him the nobleman for whose company I had quitted Captain ——! He could hardly speak for the shock he felt. At length he uttered a word or two of commiseration—and taking out a bank-note from his pocket-book, which I afterwards found was for twenty pounds—he gave it me, telling me to look after my health—and, a little agitated, I thought, left me, as if ashamed to be seen for an instant

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speaking with such a wretched object as myself!—I, who had £3000 and more at my command, accepted the *charity*—the bitter charity of this gentleman, with sullen composure—or resignation—as I thought; fancying that, by so doing, I was, in a manner, atoning for the enormity of my crimes. At the moments of my utmost need, when fainting beneath the agonies of starvation—I felt a savage pleasure in thinking how much money I had within my reach, and yet refused to touch!—Guilty—ignorant creature—as if this could have been viewed with satisfaction by HIM—Him whom I had most offended! With the help of this £20, which I was afraid to trust myself with in the house where I then resided, for fear of being robbed—perhaps murdered by those about me, I went over to a distant part of the town, and took up my residence—I forget how—in the filthy place from which you rescued me. I had not been there long, before I took to my bed, finding it impossible to drag my aching—my trembling limbs more than a few steps at a time. I felt that death had at last got his cold arms completely around me; and partly in despair—partly under an influence I knew not how to resist—kind, inestimable doctor, I sent off the line that brought you like an angel of mercy to my bedside!—My life at that place, though for so short a period, was a perpetual hell—worse, I found—far worse than any I had before known.

"Why did not I, you may ask, with the £20 I have been speaking of, seek out a decent and virtuous place of residence? I can only answer—ask the Devil—the Devil, that never once left me! Guilty myself, I went naturally to the haunts of guilt. I could not—I dared not go to any other!——And suppose I had taken lodgings at a place of good character—that such people would have received a wretch such as I too plainly appeared—what was I to do when the £20 was gone?—No; I preferred keeping in the black waters of pollution, till they closed over me! But I was saying how dreadfully I was treated in the last house to which I removed, and where you found me. When too late, I discovered that it was a noted house of call for—thieves, in addition to its other horrors; and the scenes I was compelled to witness, I cannot attempt to describe!—Would you believe it, doctor?—one morning, the woman who called at your house actually struck me upon the mouth, till the blood gushed out, because I told her I was too ill to get out of bed and accompany the rest of her wretched flock to some place of low entertainment!—I submitted to it all, however, as to purgatory—thinking I might as well die there as anywhere else!—Believe me, doctor—in my ignorance, my blindness to the horrors of hereafter—I looked on death, and longed for it—as a worn-out traveller looks out for the place of his evening's rest. I expected to find in the grave the peace, the quiet, the forgetfulness which the world denied me: and as for anything *beyond*, my mind had grown unable to comprehend the thoughts of it—to understand anything about it. But from this long and dismal dream—this trance of guilt and horror—the Providence of God"——

Miss Edwards here paused, and languidly drew her handkerchief over her face, which showed me, alas, by its colour and expression, how much she was exhausted. While I was speaking to her, in as kind a tone of sympathy as my emotion would admit of—for I need hardly say how I felt overcome with her long and melancholy narrative—she fainted. Though I used every known means, on the impulse of the moment, to recall her to consciousness, they seemed of no avail; and, greatly alarmed, I summoned in the nurse and the apothecary. As the latter entered, however, she slowly opened her eyes, and a sigh evidenced the return of consciousness. I continued by her side for nearly half an hour longer, speaking all the soothing things my heart could devise—imploring her not to harrow herself with useless recollections of the past.

"But—what a wretch—what a monster must you think me, doctor!" she exclaimed faintly, averting her

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face. "Is not the air I breathe pollution?"

"Eleanor, Eleanor! The Redeemer of the world said not so to the trembling one that washed his feet with her tears." The poor girl, overpowered with the recollection, sobbed hysterically several times, and clasped her hands in an ecstasy of emotion—murmuring, but so indistinctly I could scarce catch the words—"He said—go in peace!"

* * * *

"That blessed history," she continued, when a little recovered, "is all that makes life tolerable to me. I cling to it as an earnest of the pardon of Heaven! Oh, it was written for me—for the guilty such as me—I feel, I *know* it was! Oh! world, cruel world—I can bear your scorn! I can bear the finger of contempt pointed at me! I can submit to hear you curse me—I turn from you my eyes—I look to Him, I listen only to Him that looked on Mary, and forgave her!"

"Well, Eleanor, such thoughts as these are sent to you from heaven! He whom you speak of has heard, and answered you!—But I must not stay here. I see your feelings are too much excited; they will injure you. You must be got into bed immediately—and if you wish it, the chaplain shall read a prayer beside you! Farewell, Eleanor, till to-morrow! May your thoughts this night be of happier hue! Sleep—sleep easier, breathe freely, now that so black a burden has been removed from your feelings!"

She uttered not a word, but grasped my proffered hand with affectionate energy. I returned home, filled with mournful recollections of the sad story I had heard, and humble hopes that the mercy of Heaven might yet beam brightly upon the short period that was allotted her upon the earth! The next day, as indeed I anticipated, I found Miss Edwards in a very low depressed frame of mind, suffering the reaction consequent upon excitement. Poor girl, she would not be persuaded but that I only *forced* myself to see her, from a sense of duty; that her touch, her presence, was intolerable; that what I had listened to of her confession had made me despise her.

"Oh!" she exclaimed with bitter emotion, "how I abhor and hate myself for having told you so much; for having so driven from me my only friend!" For a time, not all my most solemn assurances availed to convince her how deeply she was mistaken. She shook her head and wrung her hands in silent wretchedness. She even despaired of the mercy of Heaven. All this, however, I saw, was only a temporary mood of feeling, which I hoped would shortly disappear. She would not allow me, but with difficulty, to shake hands with her on leaving. Her whole frame shrunk from me as she exclaimed, "Oh, touch me not!" To my great regret, and even astonishment, she continued in this melancholy humour for a whole week, till I accused myself of imprudence and cruelty in suffering her to tell me her history. My wife, on her return to London, called upon her; and her cordiality and affection a little reassured the sorrow-smitten sufferer, and had far more effect than all the medicine of the dispensary, and "the physicians there," could do for her.

We supplied her, at her own earnest wish, with a little employment, to divert her mind from preying upon her already lacerated feelings. She worked at small articles of sewing, embroidery, &c. &c., which were afterwards taken, at her desire, to a charitable bazaar in the neighbourhood. The interest taken in her case by the other medical attendants at the dispensary, was almost as great as that I felt myself. All that our united experience could suggest was anxiously done for her. Every symptom of danger was anxiously waited for, watched, and, with the blessing of Providence, expelled. All the nourishment she was capable of receiving was given her in the most inviting form. My wife, the chaplain, myself, and the resident apothecary, were frequent visitors, for the purpose of keeping her spirits in cheerful and various exercise; and, with the aid of Heaven,

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these combined efforts proved eminently successful. I have very rarely, in the case of consumption, known a patient recover from such a hopeless degree of bodily and mental prostration, so satisfactorily as Miss Edwards. Her whole nature, indeed, seemed changed; her gentle, cheerful, graceful piety—if I may be allowed the expression—made piety lovely indeed. Not that she gave way to what is too often found to be the exacerbations arising from mere superstition acting upon weakened powers; that she affected what she did not feel, and uttered the sickening slang of cant or hypocrisy. There was a lowliness, a simplicity, a fervour, a resignation about her, that could spring from sincerity alone!

The chaplain had given her a copy of the incomparable—the almost divine "Saint's Rest" of Baxter. Morning, noon, and night, did she ponder over its pages, imbibing their chastening, hallowing, elevating spirit; and would often lay down the book in a kind of transport, her features glowing with an expression that rivalled my recollections of her former beauty. * *

She was soon able to bear the motion of a hackney coach, and, attended by her faithful nurse, took several drives about the airiest parts of the suburbs. In short, her recovery was marked by the most gratifying signs of permanency. How my heart rejoiced after so long, painful, and anxious, often hopeless, an attendance on her, to enter her neatly arranged room, and see her, not stretched upon the bed of agony and death—not turning her pale face to the wall, her soul filled with frightful apprehensions of an infinitely more frightful hereafter, but sitting "clothed, and in her right mind," reading beside the window, or walking to and fro, supported by the nurse, her figure, elegant and beautifully moulded, yet painfully slender, habited in a neat dark dress; for "*white*," she said with a sigh, "she was now unworthy to wear—white, the vesture of the innocent!" With what honest pride, too, did the nurse look at her—her affectionate heart overjoyed at witnessing a recovery her own unwearied attentions had so materially conduced to insure!

Finding Miss Edwards's convalescence so encouraging and steady, I proposed to her, seriously, to make claim, through a respectable solicitor, to the property she was entitled to, and employ a part of it in engaging a small cottage, a few miles from town, before the beautiful summer weather passed away. I suggested my advertising in the newspapers for such a place as we wanted, to be engaged from year to year, ready furnished; adding that, at a very trifling cost, the nurse could be prevailed on to accompany and attend upon her.

"Come, Eleanor, now, what possible rational objection can you have to all this?" I inquired, finding she listened to my proposal in seriousness and silence.

"Only," she replied, with a sad, sweet smile, "only that it would make me too—too happy." Matters were soon arranged. A respectable solicitor was duly instructed to put her in the proper way of obtaining what was due to her. There was little difficulty in doing so. The solicitor of her uncle, when written to, came up to town, acknowledged her right, and recognised her, though he had delicacy enough to abstain from any appearance of surprise, or unnecessary inquiry. There was, consequently, no obstacle on the score of identity; and the property was at once conveyed to her, absolutely. I inserted in the newspapers such an advertisement as I spoke of, and it was answered next day by the proprietor of precisely such a place as I wanted, which, therefore, I at once engaged, on Miss Edwards's behalf, for a year, and made arrangements for her immediate removal thither. Before quitting the infirmary, unknown to me, the grateful girl slipped a £50 note—much more than she could afford with comfort—into the poor-box of the institution; and no remonstrance of mine could make her recall it.

I shall not soon forget the day selected for removing Miss Edwards

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from the infirmary; and I cannot help telling it a little particularly. We had a large glass coach at the dispensary door by eleven o'clock, in which were my wife, and two of my eldest children, to whom I had granted a holiday, for the purpose of accompanying us in this happy little journey—so different, thank God, from a former one! They, Miss Edwards, and her nurse, filled up the inside, and I rode upon the coach-box. Oh, that happy—that bright, beautiful morning!—that moral harvest home! Never did I feel the sun shine so blessedly, the summer breeze so refreshing, or the country more charming! Again, I say—that happy morning! Heaven! then indeed was thy smile upon us, shedding into all our hearts peace and gladness! That five miles' drive was such an one as I may never have again—it was,

"When the freshness of heart and of feeling were mine,
As they never again may be!"

I wonder what the coachman must have thought of me!—for I could scarcely check the exuberant spirits which animated me.

As for Miss Edwards, I learned from my wife that she spoke but little all the way. Her feelings could scarce content themselves with the silent tears which perpetually forced themselves into her eyes—the tears of ecstasy. When my wife spoke to her, she often could not answer her.

The cottage was very small, but sweetly situated, at some little distance from the high-road. Its little white walls peeped from amid honeysuckle and jessamine, like a half-hid pearl glistening between the folds of green velvet. As my two children trotted on before us with the basket of provisions, and my wife and I followed, with Miss Edwards between us, and the nurse behind, I felt that I was living months of happiness in a few moments of time. My good wife, seeing the difficulty with which Miss Edwards restrained her feelings, woman-like, began to help her fortitude, by bursting into tears, and kissing her. This quite overcame the poor girl. As we neared the cottage, she grew paler and paler—leaned more and more upon our arms—and, as we entered the parlour door, fainted. She soon recovered, however; and gently disengaging herself from my wife and the nurse, sunk upon her knees, elevated her trembling hands towards heaven, looked steadfastly upward, in a silence we all felt too sacred to disturb; and the tears at length flowing freely, relieved a heart overcharged and breaking with gratitude. That was a solemn—a blessed moment; and I am not ashamed to acknowledge, that I felt so overpowered myself with my feelings, that I was compelled to quit the little room abruptly, and recover myself presently in the garden.

Sneer, ye ignorant of the human heart! Laugh, ye who have never known the luxury of being an instrument chosen by Heaven to assist in relieving the wretched, and bringing back the contrite mourner to peace and happiness! smile, ye whose hearts are impervious to the smiles of an approving Providence! sneer, I say—smile, laugh on—but away from such a scene as this! The ground is holy—oh, profane it not!

My heart is so full with recollections of that happy day, that I could spend pages over it; but I leave the few touches I have given as they are. I add not a stroke to the little picture I have here sketched, in all the humility of conscious imperfection.

We did not quit till about eight o'clock in the evening. Miss Edwards lay on the sofa as we took leave of her, exhausted with the fatigue and excitement of the day.

"Doctor, if you should ever write to me," whispered the poor girl, as I held her hands in mine, "call this—*Magdalen* Cottage!"

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We paid her frequent visits in her new residence, and I found her, on each occasion, verifying our most anxious hopes of her permanent recovery. The mild summer—the sweet country air—a mind more at ease, and supported by the consolations of religion—did wonders for her. It was refresh-

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ing to one's feelings to be with her! She got worshipped by the few poor in her immediate neighbourhood—for whom she was daily engaged in little offices of unassuming charity—and who spoke of her always as "the good lady at the cottage." She was always dressed in a simple species of half-mourning; and her pale and interesting features looked more so, by contrast with the dark bonnet and veil she wore. I understand that she passed for a widow among the poor, and others that concerned themselves with inquiring after her; and the nurse—now rather her servant—kept up the notion.

I do not wish to represent Miss Edwards as being always, as it were, on the stilts of sentiment, or perpetually in ecstasies—no such thing. She was placid, peaceful, humble, contented, pious; and all this is consistent with a pervading tone of subdued pensiveness, or even occasional sadness. Heart's ease—sweet flower! is not the less heart's ease, because it may occasionally bloom in the shade!

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Three years, nearly, did Miss Edwards reside at Magdalen Cottage, as she touchingly styled it; her health, though extremely delicate, was on the whole satisfactory. The nurse was a perfect treasure to her. I was almost tired of expressing to her my approbation and thanks. In the beginning of the second winter, however, I regretted deeply to hear from her, that Miss Edwards, in coming from evening service at the church, about a mile off, to which, though the weather was most inclement, she had imprudently ventured—caught a severe cold, which soon revived several slumbering and startling symptoms. She had received, in short, her death-summons. Alas! alas! how soon I began to hear of profuse night-sweats—of destructive coughing—and all the other fearful train of consumptive symptoms! Her appearance, too, soon began to tell of the havoc that disease was making with her constitution—already too much shattered to resist even the slightest attacks! I cannot pain the reader by dwelling on the early progress of her last symptoms! She soon left off her daily walks to the poor, and very soon took to her bed. Disease did indeed stride apace; and by the malignant intensity of suffering he inflicted, seemed revenging himself for his temporary defeat! The victim was indeed smitten; but it lay calmly awaiting the stroke of dismissal. She bore her last affliction with extraordinary meekness and fortitude. I thought she was really—unaffectedly rejoiced at the prospect of her removal. The poor nurse was infinitely the more distressed of the two; and the most serious reproofs I found necessary, to check the violence of her feelings. I must now, however, content myself with a few hasty entries from my Diary.

*Wednesday, January 18th.*—I called on Miss Edwards about four o'clock in the afternoon, and found, from the nurse, that she was sitting up in bed, hearing three little girls, daughters of a neighbouring peasant, their catechism. I was remonstrating in the parlour with the nurse for permitting Miss Edwards to act so imprudently, when a little girl came clattering hastily down stairs into the room, with a frightened air, saying, "Come! Come!" I hastened up, and found that my poor patient had fainted in the midst of her pious task; and the two terror-struck children were standing by in silence, with their hands behind them, staring at the strange paleness and motionlessness of their preceptress. The book had fallen from her hands, and lay beside her on the bed. I sent the children away immediately, and addressed myself to my sweet, suffering, but imprudent patient. When I had succeeded in recovering her from her swoon, the first words she uttered were, in a faint tone—"Go on, love!" "My dear Eleanor—Eleanor!—it's I—Doctor ——," said I gently.

"Well, then, *you* must try it, Mary," she continued after a pause, in the same soft tone.—"Poor lady! she thinks she's got the children—she's not sensible," whispered the nurse in tears. What a lovely expression was

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there in Miss Edwards's face, blanched and wasted though it was!

"I'm afraid, my dear," she commenced again—her head still running on the pious duty in which she had been surprised by her swoon—"I'm afraid you've been playing, instead"——

"Come, Eleanor," said I gently.

"No, love, I'm better now! Go on—that's a good girl!" My vinaigrette served at length to dispel the illusion. With a faint start she recovered herself.

"Oh! Doctor ——! How are you? But," she added, after a pause, "where are the children?"

"They are gone, Eleanor! Really, really, you must not do so again!—It is much more than your strength can bear! Forgive me, Eleanor, but I have forbid them to come again," said I kindly, but peremptorily. She looked at me with a little surprise, and in silence.

"Poor things!" she at length exclaimed, "how little they thought it was the last time!"

The tears came into her eyes.

"Nurse," said she softly, "did you give them the little cakes I told you of?"

The poor woman shook her head in silence.

* * * *

"How do you feel to-day, Eleanor?" I inquired, feeling her pulse.

"Very, very weak; but so happy! I am sorry I heard the children, if you thought I did wrong; but"—her face brightened—"He that loved little children seemed with me!"

"My dear Eleanor, I don't wish to hurt your feelings, but you miscalculate your strength! Indeed, you don't know how weak you are! Now, promise me not to do so again!"

"I will, dear doctor, I will—for my flesh *is* weak! But how is Mrs ——?" (my wife.)

"She is well, and sends her love to you. I have brought with me some calves'-foot jelly; she made it herself for you, and hopes you will relish it."

"She's *very* good to me—very!" sobbed the poor girl. "I'll try to take a little this evening. But—I shall not want it long, doctor," she added, with a sad smile; "I am going, I hope, to heaven!"

She paused. I spoke not.

"If," she resumed, "such a poor guilty thing as I shall be permitted to do so—dear doctor—I will—I will always watch over you and your"——

Her emotions were becoming too violent, and I thought it best to take my leave, promising to be with her the next day. Alas, I saw her sweet sad spirit was not long to be excluded from that blessed place, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!"

*January 19th to the 24th inclusive.*—During this interval Miss Edwards declined rapidly; but her sufferings never once seemed to shake her firm confidence in the mercy of God. She was occasionally elevated, partly through hysteric excitement, to a pitch of inspiration, and uttered such eloquence as I have seldom heard from female lips. The clergyman of the parish administered to her the sacrament once or twice, and it was consolatory, he said, to see the spirit in which she received it.

On one day, during this interval, my wife (herself indisposed) accompanied me to Miss Edwards's bedside; and the poor, fond, grateful girl's feelings got quite uncontrollable. I was obliged to remove my wife, much excited, from the room; and I fear the shock of that interview — which I afterwards blamed myself much for allowing—hurried Miss Edwards more rapidly to her end. On one of the days in question, she calmly arranged her little property; leaving the interest of £1000 to the nurse for her life; £200 to the poor of the parish; a trifle to me and my wife, "for rings—if they will wear them;" and the rest to the Magdalen Hospital, on condition that it was given anonymously, and no attempt made to discover from what quarter it proceeded beyond me. I put the whole into the hands of my solicitor, and he got her will duly drawn and executed.

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*Wednesday, January 25th.* — Miss Edwards was sweetly calm and composed on this visit. She spoke to me of her funeral, begging it might be in the simplest way possible—followed by the nurse, three poor women, to whom she bequeathed black dresses for that purpose—and "if I would honour her poor unworthy dust," by myself; that there should be no name, no plate upon the coffin-lid, and no gravestone in the churchyard. She repeatedly and solemnly enjoined me to observe her wishes in this respect.

"Let me not leave my stained name behind me! No one would feel pleasure in seeing it; but I believe—I humbly hope, it is written in the Books of Forgiveness above! Let me go gently, and in silence, into my mother earth, and be thankful for so peaceful a resting-place!" The tone in which she uttered this echoes yet in my ear.

"I am happy, Eleanor," said I, much affected—"I am *very* happy to see you so composed in the prospect of death! Rely upon it, heaven is very near you."

"Yes—the Friend of publicans and sinners—I think he will not refuse to receive me!" she replied, the tears dropping from her eyes.

"How bright—how clear is all before you!"

In a solemn, slow whisper, she looked upwards with an air of awful confidence in the truth of what she was saying, and quoted the sublime language of Scripture. "'I know that my Redeemer liveth—and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God!'"

"Amen, Eleanor!" I exclaimed, taking her hand in mine—"we may meet again," said I, but paused abruptly; I felt choked.

"O doctor, yes!" she replied, with thrilling emphasis, gently compressing my hand. "You must not, doctor, when I am gone, quite forget me! Sometimes, doctor, think of the poor girl you saved from ruin—and believe she loved you!" Our tears fell fast. I could not open my lips. "I know I am not worthy to be in your thoughts—but, dear doctor! *you* will be among the last thoughts in my heart! Will you—promise that you will sometimes remember poor Eleanor!"

Almost blinded by my tears—unable to utter a word—I bent over her and kissed her forehead. "God bless thee, Eleanor," I faltered. She spoke not, but shook her head with unutterable emotion. I could bear it no longer; so I faltered that she should see me again within a few hours; and left the room. I had ridden half-way home before I could recover my self-possession. Every time that the pale image of Eleanor B—— came before me, it forced the tears afresh into my eyes, and half-determined me to return instantly to her bedside, and continue there till she died.

*Thursday, January 26th.*—As I hurried up, about twelve o'clock, to the cottage, I saw an elderly woman, a stranger, in the act of closing the parlour shutters. Then my sweet patient was gone! I stepped into the parlour.

"She is dead, I suppose?" I inquired, with a faltering voice.

"Ah, poor, good lady, she *is* gone! She's hardly been dead five minutes, though! Poor nurse is in a sad way about it."

At that moment the nurse came down stairs, wringing her hands and crying bitterly. "Oh—poor Miss Eleanor—I have lost you! I shall never have such a good mistress again,"—and she cried as though her heart were breaking.

"I hope she died easily?" I inquired, when she had grown calmer.

"Yes—yes, sir! She had been going fast ever since you left yesterday, though she tried, poor, dear thing!—but it was of no use—to go on with something for you which she had long been about—and—she died with it in her hands!"

Without uttering a word more, I went up into the bedroom. I cannot describe the peculiar feelings of awe with which I am struck on seeing a

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very recent corpse—before it has been touched—before anything has been stirred or altered in the room about it. How forcibly I felt them on the present occasion!

"Did she say anything before she died?" I inquired of the nurse, as we stood watching the remains.

"She sighed—and said softly, 'Kiss me, nurse!—I'm leaving you!'—and died in a few minutes after, as if she was falling asleep!" replied the nurse.

She lay on her left side, her black hair half-concealing her face; and in her hand was a sampler, which she had been working at, I found, frequently during her illness, with a view of having it given to me after her death—and which was not yet finished. I gently disengaged it from her insensible grasp—and let the reader imagine my feelings, on seeing nothing but the letters—

"MARY MAGDALEN—
E——"

The other letter of her initials—"B"—the finger of death had prevented her adding.

I shall never part with that sampler till I die!—Oh, poor Mary Magdalen!—I will not forget thee!

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# CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE BARONET'S BRIDE.

NEVER was man married under more auspicious circumstances than Sir Henry Harleigh. He the descendant of an ancient house, and the accomplished possessor of a splendid fortune; his bride the fairest flower in the family of a distinguished nobleman; surely here were elements of high happiness, warranting the congratulations of the "troops of friends" who, by their presence, added *éclat* to the imposing nuptials. "Heaven bless thee, sweet Anne!" sobbed the venerable peer, her father, folding his daughter in his arms, as Sir Henry advanced to conduct her to his travelling-chariot; "may these be the last tears thou wilt have occasion to shed!" The blushing, trembling girl could make no reply; and linking her arm in that of her handsome husband, dizzy with agitation, and almost insensible of the many hands that shook hers in passing, suffered him to lead her through the throng of guests above, and lines of be-favoured lackeys below, to the chariot waiting to conduct "the happy pair" to a romantic residence of Sir Henry's in Wales. The moment they were seated, the steps were shut up—the door closed. Sir Henry hastily waved a final adieu to the company thronging the windows of the drawing-room he had just quitted; the postilions cracked their whips, and away dashed the chariot-and-four, amidst the cheery pealing of the bells—

—bearing its precious throbbing charge
To halcyon climes afar.

Sir Henry's character contrasted strongly, in some respects, with that of his lady. His urbanity was tinctured with a certain reserve, or rather melancholy, which some considered the effect of an early and severe devotion to study; others, and perhaps more truly, a constitutional tendency inherited from his mother. There was much subdued energy in his character; and you could not fail, under all this calmness of demeanour, to observe the strugglings of talent and

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ambition. Lady Anne, on the contrary, was all sprightliness and frolic. It was like a sunbeam and a cloud brought together; the one, in short, "L'Allegro;" the other "Il Penseroso." The qualities of each were calculated to attemper those of the other, alternately mitigating and brightening; and who would not predicate a happy harmonious union of *such* extremes?

Six months after their marriage, the still "happy couple" returned to town, after having traversed an extensive portion of the Continent. Lady Anne looked lovelier, and her spirits were more buoyant and brilliant than ever. She had apparently transfused not a little of her vivacity into her husband's more tranquil temperament: his manners exhibited a briskness and joyousness which none of his friends had ever witnessed in him before. During the whole of the London "season," Lady Anne revelled in enjoyment; the idol of her husband—the centre of gaiety and cheerfulness—the star of fashion. Her *début* at Court was one of the most flattering of the day. It was generally talked of, that the languid elegance, the listless fastidiousness of royalty, had been quickened into something like an appearance of interest, as the fair bride bowed before it, in the graceful attitude of loyal duty. Once or twice I had the satisfaction of meeting with her ladyship in public—all charming vivacity—all sparkle—followed by crowds of flatterers—till one would have thought her nearly intoxicated with their fragrant incense! "What a sweet smile!" — "How passing graceful!"—"What a swan-like neck!" —"Ah! happy fellow that Harleigh!" —"Seen Lady Anne? Oh! yonder she moves—there—that laughing lady in white satin, tapping the French ambassador on the shoulder with her fan."—"What! Is *that* Lady Anne, now waltzing with Lord ——? What a superb foot and ankle! What a sylph it is!" Such was the ball-room tittle-tattle that ever accompanied Sir Henry and his lady, in passing through the mazes of a London season; and I doubt not the reader would have joined in it, could he have seen Lady Anne! Should I attempt to present her bodily before him, *he* would suspect me of culling the hyperboles of the novelist, while *I* should feel that after all I had failed. He should have seen for himself the light of passion—of feeling and thought—that shone in her blue eyes—the beauteous serenity that reigned in her aristocratic brow—"in all her gestures, dignity and love!" There is a picture of a young lady by Sir Joshua Reynolds that has been sworn to by many as the image of Lady Anne; and it is one worthy of that great artist's pencil. Not the least characteristic trait about her, was the *naiveté* with which she acknowledged her love of Sir Henry, displaying it on all occasions by

Looks of reverent fondness,

that disdained concealment. And so indeed was it with the baronet. Each was the other's pride and contentment; and both were the envy of society. Ah, who could look upon them and believe that so dark a day was to come! But I will not anticipate.

In due time Sir Henry completed the extensive arrangements for his town residence; and, by the beginning of the ensuing winter, Lady Anne found herself at the head of as splendid an establishment as her heart could desire. The obsequious morning prints soon teemed with accounts of *his* dinners; and of the balls, routs, *soirées*, and *conversaziones* given by this "new queen of the evening hour." Sir Henry, who represented his county in Parliament, and consequently had many calls upon his time—for he was rather disposed to be a "working" member—let his lady have it all her own way. He mingled but little in her gaieties; and when he did, it was evident that his thoughts were elsewhere—that he rather tolerated than enjoyed them. He soon settled into the habitudes of the man of *political* fashion, seldom deviating from the track, with all its absorbing associa-

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tions, bounded by the House and the Clubs; — those sunk rocks of many a woman's domestic happiness! In short, Sir Henry—man of fashion as he was—was somewhat of a character, and was given ample credit for sporting "the eccentric." His manners were marked by a dignity that often froze into hauteur, and sometimes degenerated into almost surly abruptness; which, however, was easily carried to the account of severe political application and abstraction. Towards his beautiful wife, however, he preserved a demeanour of uniform tenderness. She could not form a wish that he did not even personally endeavour to secure her the means of gratifying. Considering the number and importance of his public engagements, many wondered that he could contrive to be so often seen accompanying her in rides and drives about the Park and elsewhere; but who could name

The sacrifice affection would not yield?

Some there were, however, who ere long imagined they detected a moodiness—an irritability—a restlessness—of which his political engagements appeared hardly to afford a sufficient explanation. They spoke of his sudden fits of absence, and the agitation he displayed on being startled from them. What could there be to disturb him? was he running beyond his income to supply his lady's extravagance? was he offended at any lightness or indiscretion of which she might have been guilty? had he given credence to any of the hundred tales circulated in society of every woman eminent in the *haut ton?* was he embarrassed with the consequences of some deep political move? No one could tell; but many marked the increasing indications of his dissatisfaction and depression. Observation soon fastened her keen eyes upon Lady Anne, and detected occasional clouds upon her generally joyous countenance. Her bright eye was often laden with anxiety; the colour of her cheek varied; the blandness and cheerfulness of her manner gave place to frequent abruptness, petulance, and absence; symptoms these which soon set her friends sympathising, and her acquaintance speculating. Whenever this sort of inquiry is aroused, charity falls asleep. She never seemed at ease, it was said, in her husband's presence—his departure seemed the signal for her returning gaiety. Strange to say, each seemed the conscious source of the other's anxiety and apprehension. Each had been detected casting furtive glances at the other—tracking one another's motions, and listening even to one another's conversation; and some went so far as to assert that each had been observed on such occasions to turn suddenly pale. What could be the matter? Everybody wondered—no one knew. Some attributed their changed deportment to the exhaustion consequent upon late hours and excitement; a few hinted the probability of a family; many whispered that Sir Henry—some that Lady Anne—gambled. Others, again, insinuated that each had too good cause to be dissatisfied with the other's fidelity. When, however, it got currently reported that a letter was one evening given to Sir Henry at his club, which blanched his face and shook his hand as he read it—that his whole manner was disturbed for days after, and that he even absented himself from a grand debate in the House—an occasion on which he was specially pledged to support his party—curiosity was at once heightened and bewildered. Then, again, it was undeniable that they generally treated one another with the utmost tenderness—*really*—unequivocally. Lady Anne, however, daily exhibited symptoms of increasing disquietude; the lustre faded from her eye, the colour from her cheek—her vivacity totally disappeared—she no longer even affected it. "How thin she gets!" was an exclamation heard on all hands. They were seen less frequently in society; and even when they did enter into it, it was evidently an intolerable burden. Sighs were heard to escape from Lady Anne; her eyes were seen occasionally filled with tears; and it

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was noticed, that, on observing Sir Henry watching her—which was often the case—she made violent efforts to recover her composure. Thus in tears one evening, curiosity was strained to the utmost when Sir Henry approached her, rather stiffly bowed away the gentleman who was proposing to dance with her, drew her arm within his, and, with some trepidation of manner, quitted the room. "Good heaven! what *can* be behind the scenes?" thought fifty different people who had witnessed this last exhibition.

"Afraid they lead a woeful life together," said one. "*I* never thought they would suit one another," was the reply.

"'Pon my soul," simpered a sickly scion of nobility, "'tis an odd thing to say—but—but—gad, I do believe I can explain it all! Harleigh, I know, hates to see her dance with *me*—whew!"

"Haven't you seen her turn pale, and seemed quite sick at heart, when she has noticed him talking to Miss ——?" wheezed an old dowager, whose daughter had attempted to join in the race for the baronet's hand. These, and a thousand others, were questions, hints, and inuendoes banded about everywhere during the remainder of the season; soon after the close of which, Lady Anne brought her husband a "son and heir;" and, as soon as circumstances would permit, the whole establishment was ordered out of town, and Sir Henry and his lady set off no one knew whither. It was presently discovered, however, that they were spending the summer in a sequestered part of Switzerland. At an advanced period of the autumn they returned to London; and the little that was seen of them in society, served to show that their Continental sojourn had worked little or no change in either—save that Lady Anne, since her accouchement, seemed to have become far more delicate in health than usual under similar circumstances. Rumour and speculation were suddenly revived by an extraordinary move of Sir Henry's—he broke up, at a moment's warning, his extensive town establishment, and withdrew to a beautiful mansion about ten or twelve miles distant from the metropolis. Strange as was such a step, it had the effect, probably contemplated by the baronet, of quieting curiosity, as soon as the hubbub occasioned by the removal of its cause had ceased. In the vortex of London pleasure and dissipation, who can think of objects no longer present to provoke notice and inquiry? One thing was obvious—that Lady Anne's family either were, or affected to be, in the dark about the source of her disquietude. The old peer, whose health was rapidly declining, had removed to his native air, in a remote part of Ireland. Several of his daughters, fine fashionable women, continued in town. It was whispered that their visits to Sir Henry's new residence had been coldly discouraged; and thus, if secresy and seclusion were the objects aimed at by the baronet, he apparently succeeded in attaining them.

I may observe that, during the period above referred to, several inquiries had been made of *me* concerning the topics in question, by my patients and others, who supposed that a former professional acquaintance with the baronet, slight though it was, gave me some initiation into the mysteries of his conduct. Such, I need hardly say, were queries I was utterly unable to answer. Sir Henry, though a polite, was at all times a distant, uncommunicative man; and had he even been otherwise, we came but seldom into personal contact since his marriage. I therefore shared, instead of satisfying, the prevalent curiosity respecting his movements.

It was late on the evening of the 25th of April 181–, that a letter was put into my hands, bearing on the envelope the words "Private and confidential." The frank was by Sir Henry Harleigh, and the letter, which also was from him, ran thus. Let the reader imagine my astonishment on perusing it:—

"Dear Doctor ——. My travelling carriage-and-four will be at your door to-morrow morning between nine and

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ten o'clock, for the purpose of conveying you down to my house, about ten miles from town, where your services are required. Let me implore you not to permit any engagement—short of life or death—to stand in the way of your coming at the time, and in the mode I have presumed to point out. Your presence, believe me, is required on matters of special urgency, and, you will permit me to add, of *special confidence.* I may state, in a word, that the sole object of your visit is Lady Anne. I shall, if possible, and you are punctual, meet you on the road, in order that you may be, in some measure, prepared for the duties that will await you. I am, &c. &c.,

"HENRY HARLEIGH.

"P.S.—Pray forgive me if I say I have opened my letter for the sake of entreating you not to apprise *anybody* of the circumstance of my sending for you."

This communication threw me into a maze of conjectures. I apprehended that the ensuing morning would introduce me to some scene of distress; and my imagination could suggest only family discord as the occasion. I soon made the requisite arrangements; and when the morning came, without having shown my wife the baronet's letter, or giving her any clue to my destination, jumped into the pea-green chariot-and-four the instant that it drew up at my door—and was presently whirled out of town at the rate of twelve miles an hour. I observed that the panels of the carriage had neither crest nor supporters; and the colour was not that of the baronet's. I did not meet the baronet, as his letter led me to expect. On reaching the park gates, which stood open, the groom behind leaped down the instant that the reeking horses could be stopped, opened the carriage-door, and, with a respectful bow, informed me that the baronet begged I would alight at the gates. Of course I acquiesced, and walked up the avenue to the house, full of amazement at the apparent mystery which was thrown about my movement. I ascended the spreading steps which led to the hall-door, and even pushed it open without encountering any one. On ringing the bell, however, an elderly and not very neatly dressed female made her appearance, and asked me, with a respectful curtsy, whether my name was "Dr ——." On being answered in the affirmative, she said that Sir Henry was waiting for me in a room adjoining, and immediately led the way to it. I thought it singular enough that no male domestic should have hitherto made his appearance, knowing that in town Sir Henry kept an unusually large retinue of such gentry. I thought also that I perceived something unusual, not only in the countenance and manner of the female who had answered my summons, but of the groom who attended me from town. I was soon, however, in the presence of the baronet. The room was spacious and lofty, and furnished in a style of splendid elegance. Several busts, statues, and valuable paintings graced the corners and sides, together with a noble library, containing, I should think, several thousand volumes. Before I had had time to cast more than a cursory glance around me, Sir Henry issued from a door at the further extremity of the library, and, advancing hastily to me, shook me by the hand with cordiality. He wore a flowered green velvet dressing-gown, and his shirt-collars were open. I thought I had never seen a finer figure, or a more expressive countenance—the latter, however, clouded with mingled sternness and anxiety.

"Doctor ——," said he, conducting me to a seat, "I feel greatly obliged by this prompt attention to my wishes—which, however, I fear must have inconvenienced you. We are at breakfast. Have *you* breakfasted?"

"Yes—but my drive has sharpened my appetite afresh—I think I could not resist a cup of chocolate or coffee."

"Ah—good! I'm happy to hear it. Perhaps, then, you will permit me to take a turn round the garden—and then we will join Lady Anne in the breakfast-room?"—I assented. There was something flurried in his manner

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and peremptory in his tone—I saw there was something that agitated him, and waited for the *denouement* with interest. In a moment or two, we were walking together in the garden, which we had entered through a glass door.

"Doctor," said Sir Henry, in a low tone, "I have sent for you on a most melancholy errand to-day"—he seemed agitated, and paused—proceeding, "I have infinite satisfaction in being able to avail myself of your services; for I know that you are both kind and experienced—as well as confidential?" Again he paused, and looked full at me—I bowed, and he resumed.

"Possibly you may have occasionally heard surmises about Lady Anne and myself?—I believe we have occasioned no little speculation latterly." I smiled and bowed off his inquiry. "I am conscious that there has been some ground for it"—he continued, with a sigh—"and I now find the time is arrived when all must be known—I must explain it all to you. You have, I believe, occasionally met us in society, and recollect her ladyship?"

"Several times, Sir Henry—and I have a distinct recollection of her.—Indeed"——

"Did it ever strike you that there was anything remarkable either in her countenance or deportment?"

I looked, at a loss to understand him.

"I—I mean—did you ever observe a certain peculiarity of expression in her features?" he continued earnestly.

"Why—let me see—I have certainly observed her exhibit languor and lassitude—her cheek has been pale, and her countenance now and then saddened with anxiety. I supposed, however, there was no unusual mode of accounting for it, Sir Henry"—I added, with a smile. The baronet's face was clouded for a moment, as if with displeasure and anxiety.

"Ah"—he replied hastily—"I see—I understand you—but you are quite mistaken—totally so. Pray, is that the general supposition?"

"Why—I am not aware of its being expressed in so many words; but it was one that struck *me* immediately—as a matter of course." As I was speaking, I observed Sir Henry changing colour.

"Doctor ——," said he, in a low agitated voice, grasping my arm as if with involuntary energy—"We have no time to lose. One word—alas, *one* word—will explain all. It is horrible torture to me—but I can conceal it no longer. You must be told the truth at once. Lady Anne is—*insane!*" He rather gasped than spoke the last word. He stood suddenly still, and covered his face with his hands. He shook with agitation. Neither of us spoke for a moment or two—except that I almost unconsciously echoed the last word he uttered. "Insane!—Why, I can scarcely believe my ears, Sir Henry. Do you use the last word in its literal—its medical sense?"

"Yes, I do!—I mean that my wife is mad—Yes! with a madwoman you are asked to sit down to breakfast. I can assure you, Dr ——, that the anguish I have latterly endured on this horrid account has nearly driven me to the same condition! O God! what a dreadful life has been mine for this last year or two, as I have seen this tremendous calamity gradually befalling me"——

I implored him to restrain his feelings.

"Yes—you are right," said he, after a pause, in which he tried to master his emotion—"I have recovered myself. Let us repair to the breakfast-room. For Heaven's sake, appear—if you can—as though nothing had transpired between us. Make any imaginable excuse you please for coming hither. Say you were called in by me, on my own account—for—for—any complaint you choose to mention. It will be for you to watch my poor Lady Anne with profound attention—but of course not obviously.—I shall take an opportunity, as if by chance, of leaving you alone with her. Afterwards we will concert the steps necessary in this dreadful emergency. By the way—you must not expect to see anything wild or extravagant in her manner. She will not appear even eccentric—for she is very guarded before strangers. Hush!" said he, shaking and turning

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round palely—"did you hear—no, it was a mistake!—Alas, how nervous I am become!—I have perfect control over her—but watch her eye—her mouth—her *eye*"—he shuddered—"and you will know all. Now, doctor, for mercy's sake don't commit yourself, or me!" he whispered, as we regained the room we had quitted. He paused for a moment, as if to expend a heavy sigh—and then, opening the door through which he had originally entered to receive me, ushered me into the breakfast room. Lady Anne—beautiful creature—in a white morning-dress, sat beside the silver urn, apparently reading the newspaper. She seemed surprised at seeing me, and bowed politely when Sir Henry mentioned my name, without moving from her seat. Her cheek was very pale—and there was an expression of deep anxiety—or rather apprehension—in her eye, which glanced rapidly from me to Sir Henry, and from him to me. With all his efforts, Sir Henry could not appear calm—his cheek was flushed—his hand unsteady—his voice thick—his manner flurried.

"Are not you well, Sir Henry?" inquired his lady, looking earnestly at him.

"Never better, love!" he replied, with an effort at smiling.

"I fear I have disturbed your ladyship in reading the Morning Post," said I, interrupting an embarrassed pause.

"Oh, not at all, sir—not the least! There is nothing in it of any interest," she replied with a faint sigh; "I was only looking, Henry, over a silly account of the Duchess of ——'s fête. Do you take breakfast?" addressing me.

"A single cup of tea, and a slice of this tongue, are all I shall trouble your ladyship for. Talking, by the way, of fêtes," I added carelessly, "it is whispered in the world that your ladyship had taken the veil—or—or—died; in short, we are all wondering what has become of your ladyship—that is, of *both* of you!"

"Ah!" said the baronet with affected eagerness, "I suppose, by the way, we come in for our share of hint and inuendo! Pray, what is the latest coinage, doctor, from the mint of scandal and tittle-tattle?"

Lady Anne's hand trembled as she handed me the cup of tea I had asked for, and her eye settled apprehensively on that of her husband. "Why, the general impression is, that you are playing misanthrope, in consequence of some political pique." Sir Henry laughed feebly. "And your ladyship, too, turns absentee! I fear you are not in the health—the brilliant spirits—which used to charm the world."

"Indeed, doctor, I am not! I am one of the many victims"——

"Of ennui," interrupted the baronet quickly, fixing an imperative eye upon his lady, I saw with what nervous apprehension, lest she should afford even the desired corroboration of what he had told me in the garden.

"Yes, yes, ennui," she replied timidly, adding, with a sigh, "I wonder the world remembers us so long."

"I have a note to write, doctor," said the baronet suddenly, after the lapse of about five or ten minutes, treading at the same time gently on my foot, "which I intend to beg you will carry up to town for me. Will you excuse me for a few moments?" I bowed. "Lady Anne, I daresay, will entertain you from the Morning Post—ha! ha!"

She smiled faintly. I observed Sir Henry's eye fixed upon her, as he shut the door, with an expression of agonising apprehension. The reader may imagine the peculiar feelings of embarrassment with which I found myself at length alone with Lady Anne. Being ignorant of the degree or species of her mental infirmity, I felt much at a loss how to shape my conversation. As far as one could judge from appearances, she was as perfectly sane as I considered myself. I could detect no wildness of the eye—no incoherence of language—no eccentricity of deportment—nothing but an air of languor and anxiety.

"Sir Henry is looking well," said I, as he closed the door.

"Yes—he always looks well; even if he were ill, he would not *look* so."

"I wish I could sincerely compli-

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ment your ladyship on your looks," I continued, eyeing her keenly.

"Certainly I *have* been better than I am at present," she replied with a sigh—"What I have to complain of, however, is not so much bodily ailing as lowness of spirits."

"Your ladyship is not the first on whom a sudden seclusion from society has had similar effects. Then, why not return to town—at least for a season?"

"There are—reasons—why I should at present prefer to continue in retirement," she replied, dropping her eyes to avoid the steadfast look with which I regarded them.

"*Reasons!*—permit me to ask your ladyship the import of such mysterious terms?" I inquired, with gentle earnestness, drawing my chair nearer to her, believing that the ice was at length broken.

"I am not aware, doctor," said she coldly, and with an air of rather haughty surprise, "that I said anything that could be called *mysterious*."

"Pardon, pardon me, my lady! I was only anxious lest you might have any secret source of anxiety preying on your mind, and from which I might have the power of relieving you. Permit me to say, how deeply grieved I am to see your ladyship's altered looks. I need not disguise the fact that Sir Henry is exceedingly anxious on your account"——

"What! what! Sir Henry anxious—on my account!" she repeated, with an air of astonishment; "why, can it then be possible that *I* am the object of your present visit, Dr ——?"

I paused for a moment. Why should I conceal or deny the fact, thought I.

"Your ladyship guesses aright. Sir Henry's anxieties have brought me hither this morning. He wishes me to ascertain whether your ladyship labours under indisposition of any kind."

"And pray, doctor," continued her ladyship, turning pale as she spoke, "what does he imagine my complaint to be? Did he mention any particular symptoms?"

"Indeed he did—lassitude—loss of appetite—lowness of spirits."

She raised her handkerchief to her eyes, which, glistening with tears, she presently directed to the window, as if she dreaded to encounter mine. Her lips quivered with emotion.

"Dear lady, for Heaven's sake be calm! Why should you distress yourself?" said I, gently placing my fingers upon her wrist, at which she started, withdrew her hand, looked me rather wildly full in the face, and bursting into tears, wept for some moments in silence.

"Oh, Doctor ——!" at length she sobbed, in hesitating, passionate accents—"you cannot—you cannot imagine how very ill I am—*here*," placing her hand upon her heart. "I am a wretched, a miserable woman! There never lived a more unfortunate being! I shall never, never be happy again!" she continued vehemently.

"Come, come, your ladyship must make a confidant of me. What, in Heaven's name, can be the meaning of all this emotion? No one, sure, can have used you ill? Come, tell me all about it!"

"Oh, I cannot—I dare not! It is a painful secret to keep, but it would be dreadful to tell it. Have you *really* no idea of it? Has it not, then, been openly whispered about in the world?" she inquired eagerly, with much wildness in her manner.

Alas, poor Lady Anne! I had seen and heard enough to satisfy me that her state corroborated the fears expressed by Sir Henry, whose return at that moment, with a sealed note in his hand, put an end to our melancholy *tête-à-tête*. He cast a sudden keen glance of scrutiny at his lady and me, and then went up to her and kissed her tenderly, without speaking. What wretchedness was in his features at that moment! I saw by his manner that he desired me to rise and take my leave; and, after a few words on indifferent subjects, I rose, bowed to her ladyship, and, accompanied by the baronet, withdrew.

"Well, am I right or wrong, doctor,



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in my terrible suspicions?" inquired the baronet, his manner much disturbed, and trembling from head to foot, as we stood together in the large bow-window of his library. I sighed, and shook my head.

"Did she make any allusions to the present arrangement I have been obliged to adopt in the house?"

I told him the substance of what had passed between us. He sighed profoundly, and covered his eyes for a moment with his hands.

"Is her ladyship ever violent?" I inquired.

"No—seldom—never, never! I wish she were! Anything—anything to dissipate the horrid monotony of melancholy madness—but I cannot bear to talk on the subject. I can scarcely control my feelings!" He turned from me, and stood looking through the window, evidently overpowered with grief. For a minute or two neither of us spoke.

"The dreadful subject *forces* itself upon us," said he, suddenly turning again towards me. "Doctor, what, in Heaven's name—what is to be done in this tremendous emergency? Let our first care be to prevent exposure. I suppose—a temporary seclusion, I am afraid, will be necessary?" he added, looking gloomily at me. I told him I feared such a course would certainly be advisable, if not even necessary; and assured him that he need be under no apprehension on that score, for there were many admirable retreats for such patients as his unfortunate lady, where privacy, comfort, amusement, and skilful surveillance were combined. I told him not to despond of his lady's early restoration to society.

"Oh, doctor!" he groaned, clasping his hands vehemently together, "the maddening thought that my sweet, my darling wife, must be banished from my bosom—from her home—from her child—and become the inmate of—of—a"—— He ceased abruptly. A wild smile shot across his features.

"Doctor," said he, lowering his tone to a faint whisper, "can I trust you with a secret? I know I am acting imprudently—unnecessarily disclosing it—but I know it will be safe with *you!*"

I bowed, and listened in breathless wonder. * * My flesh crept from head to foot as he went on. I had been all along the dupe of a MADMAN. His eye was fixed upon me with a devilish expression. The shock deprived me of utterance—for a while almost of sight and hearing. I was startled back into consciousness by a loud laugh uttered by the baronet. He was pointing at me, with his arm and finger extended, almost touching my face, with an air of derision. The dreadful truth flashed all at once upon my mind. I could now understand the illness—the melancholy of Lady Anne—whose blanched countenance, looking through the half-opened door, caught my eye at that moment, as I happened to turn in the direction of the breakfast-room. I trembled lest the madman should also see her, and burst into violence!

The "secret" of the baronet consisted in his alleged discovery of a mode of converting *tallow into wax:* That it would, when carried into effect, produce him a revenue of fifty thousand a-year: That because the king could not prevail upon him to disclose it, he had sent spies to watch all his movements, and had threatened to arrest him for high treason! All this horrid nonsense he told me in a low, serious, energetic tone of voice and manner; and though my countenance must have turned deadly pale when the shocking discovery first broke upon me, and my violent agitation become apparent, Sir Henry did not seem to notice it. I know not what called forth the laugh I have mentioned, unless it was the delight he experienced from the success with which he imposed upon me so long.

"But, doctor," he continued, "I have not disclosed this great secret to you for nothing. I set about discovering it in consequence of an alarming accident which has happened to me, and of which both you and the world will ere long hear much. It became necessary, in a word that I should

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develop a new source of independence—and, thank Heaven, at length it is found! But the mere *money* it will produce is the least consideration—there are grander results to follow; but of them anon! You, doctor, are a scientific man—I am but superficially so; and that is a species of knowledge essential to the successful use of my great discovery. We must therefore become *partners*—eh?" I bowed. "The terms, you know, we can arrange afterwards. Ah, ha, ha! what will my constituents—what will my political friends—say to this? Sir Henry Harleigh turned wax-maker!—Why, doctor, why are you so silent? Chopfallen, eh?—and why?"

I had been pondering all the while on the proper course to follow under such extraordinary and melancholy circumstances, and therefore permitted him to ramble on as he pleased. "Calculating the profits, eh?—Well—but we must go through a good deal before we get to that part of the story, believe me! First and foremost"—his countenance fell, and he cast a disturbed glance at the breakfast-room door—"we must make some decisive arrangements about poor Lady Anne. She knows my secret, and it is the thoughts of it that have turned her head—(women, you know, cannot bear sudden fortune!)—but, oh! such a gentle madness is hers!" He uttered this last exclamation in a tone that touched my heart to the quick; melting, moving, soul-subduing was it, as some of the whispers of Kean in Othello!

"Doctor," he commenced abruptly, after a pause, "let me consider of it for a moment—a thought suggests itself—I would not have her feelings wounded for worlds!—I'll consider of it, and presently tell you my determination." He folded his arms on his breast, and walked slowly up and down the library, as if engaged in profound contemplation, and so continued for five or ten minutes, as if he had utterly forgotten me, who stood leaning against the window-frame, watching him with unutterable feelings. What should I do? It was next to impossible for me to have another interview with Lady Anne before leaving. I thought it on the whole advisable not to alarm his suspicions by any such attempt, but to take my departure as quietly and quickly as possible; determined, on reaching London, to communicate immediately with Mr Courthrope, his brother-in-law, with whom I had some little acquaintance, and with him suggest such measures as were necessary to secure the safety, not only of the baronet, but his wretched lady. This resolution formed, I felt anxious to be gone. As the poor baronet's cogitations, however, seemed far from approaching a close, I found it necessary to interrupt him.

"Well, Sir Henry," said I, moving from the window-recess, "I must leave you, for I have many engagements in town."

"Do you know, now," said he with a puzzled air, "I positively cannot remember what it was I had to think about! How very absurd! *What* was it, now?" standing still, and corrugating his brows.

"Oh," said I, "it was whether it would be proper for me to see Lady Anne before I left"——"Ah," he interrupted briskly, "ay, so it was—I recollect—why—see Lady Anne?—No—I think not," he replied, with an abrupt, peculiar tone and manner, as if displeased with the proposal. "I will accompany you to the road, where you will find the carriage in readiness to take you back to town." He at the same time took from a pocket-book in his bosom pocket a note-case, and gave me a check, by way of fee, of £500!

"By the way," said he abruptly, as arm-in-arm we walked down to the park gates, "what, after all, are we to do with Lady Anne? How strange that we should have forgotten her! Well, what step do you intend taking next?"—I sighed.

"I must turn it over carefully in my mind, before I commit myself."

"Ah, Sallust!—*Priusquam incipias—consulto; sed ubi consulueris—sed ubi consulueris*, Doctor ——."

"*Maturè facto opus sit*, Sir Henry," I replied, humouring his recollection.

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"Good. There never was anything more curt and pretty." He repeated the sentence. "Well, and *what* will you do?"

"I cannot precisely say at present; but you may rely upon seeing me here again this evening. I hope you will conceal it from Lady Anne, however, or it may alarm her."

"Mind me, doctor," said he abruptly, his features clouding over with a strange expression. "I—I—will have no violence used."

"Violence! my dear Sir Henry! violence! God forbid!" I exclaimed with unaffected amazement.

"Of course, doctor, I hold you *personally*," laying a strenuous emphasis on the last word, "I hold you *personally* responsible for whatever measures may be adopted. Here, however, is the carriage. I shall await your return with anxiety." I shook him by the hand, and stepped into the chariot.

"Good-morning—good-morning, Sir Henry!" I exclaimed, as the postilions were preparing to start. He put in his head at the window, and in a hurried tone whispered—"On second thoughts, Dr ——, I shall decline any further interference in the matter—at least to-day." He had scarcely uttered the last words, when the chariot drove off.

"Hollo! hark ye, fellow! stop! stop!" shouted the baronet at the top of his voice, "stop, or I'll *fire!*" The postilions, who, I observed, had set off at pretty near a gallop, seemed disposed to continue it; but on hearing the last alarming words, instantaneously drew up. I looked with amazement through the window, and beheld Sir Henry hurrying towards us—fury in his features, and a pocket-pistol in his extended right hand.

"Good God, Sir Henry!" I exclaimed, terror-struck, "what can be the meaning of this extraordinary conduct?"

"A word in your ear, doctor," he panted, coming close up to the carriage door.

"Speak, for Heaven's sake—speak, Sir Henry," said I, leaning my head towards him.

"I suspect you intend violent measures towards me, Doctor ——."

"Against *you!* Violent measures—against *anybody?*—you are dreaming, Sir Henry!"

"Ah, I see further into your designs than you imagine, Doctor ——! You wish to extract my secret from me, for your own exclusive advantage. So, mark me—if you come again to —— Hall, you shall not return alive—so help me ——! Adieu!" He strode haughtily off, waved his hand to the terrified postilions, and we soon lost sight of the unhappy madman. I threw myself back in my seat completely bewildered. Not only my own personal safety, but that of Lady Anne was menaced. What might not frenzy prompt him to do, during my absence, and on my return? Full of these agitating thoughts, I rejoiced to find myself thundering townward, as fast as four horses could carry me, in obedience to the orders I had given the postilions, the instant that Sir Henry quitted us. At length we reached a steep hill, that compelled us to slacken our pace, and give breath to our panting horses. I opened the front window, and bespoke the nearest postilion.

"Boy, there! Are you in Sir Henry's service?"

"No, sir, not *now* exactly—but we sarves him as much as thof we was, for the matter of that," he replied, touching his hat.

"Were you surprised to see what occurred at starting?"

"No, sir," he replied, lowering his tone, and looking about him, as if he expected to find the baronet at his heels. "He's done many a stranger thing nor that, sir, lately!"

"I suppose, then, you consider him not exactly in his right senses, eh?"

"It a'n't for the likes o' *me* to say such a thing of my betters, sir; but *this* I may make bold for to say, sir, if as how I, or any of my fellow-sarvants, had done the likes o' what we've latterly seen up at the Hall there, they'd a' clapped *us* into jail or bedlam long ago!"

"Indeed! Why, what has been going on?"

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"You'll not tell of a poor lad like me—will you, sir?"

"Oh, no! you may be sure of that—I'll keep your secret."

"Well, sir," said he, speaking more unconstrainedly, turning round in his saddle full towards me—"first and foremost, he's discharged *me*, and Thomas here, my fellow-sarvant, an' we takes up at the inn, a mile or so from the Hall; likewise the coachman and the footman; likewise all the women sarvants—always excepting the cook, and my lady's maid—and a'n't *them* a few sarvants for to do all the work of that great Hall? A'n't *that* strange-like, sir?"

"Well, what else? How does Sir Henry pass his time?"

"Pass his time, sir? Why, sir, we hears from cook, as how he boils candles, sir," quoth the fellow, grinning.

"Boils candles, sirrah? What do you mean? Are you in earnest?"

"Yes, sir, I be indeed! He'll boil as many as twenty in a day, in the cook's best saucepans; and then he pours the most precious brandy into the mess—wasting good brandy—and then throws it all into a deep hole every night, that he has dug in the garden. 'Twas no later nor yesterday, sir, cook told me all—how she happened to be squinting through the keyhole, and no harm neither, sir, (axing your pardon)—when a man goes on in sich ways as them—and seed him kneel down upon the dirty hearth, before the saucepan full of candles, as they were boiling, and pray sich gibberish—like!"

"Well!" said I with a sigh, "but what does her ladyship all this while?"

"Oh, sir, our poor lady is worn almost in a manner to skin and bone! She follows him about like a ghost, and cries her eyes out; but for all that she is so gentle-like, he's woundy starn with her, and watches her just like a cat does a mouse, as one would say! Once he locked her in her bedroom all day, and only gave her bread and water! But the strangest thing is yet to come, sir; he makes out that it's *her* that's mad! so that, for a long time, we all believed it was so—for, sir, it's only of late that we began to see how the real truth of the matter stood, sir. Sir Henry was always, since we've known him, a bit queer or so, but steady in the main; and as our poor lady was always mopish and melancholic-like, it was natral we should give in to believe it was her that was, as one would say, melancholy mad, and so all true what Sir Henry said of her."

"Is Sir Henry ever violent?"

"Lord, sir! Mrs Higgins, that's the cook, tells strange tales of him just latterly. He bolts every door, great and small, in the Hall, with his own hands, every night, and walks about in it with a loaded blunderbuss!"

"Miss Sims," said the further postilion, "that's my lady's maid, told Mrs Higgins, and she told my sister, who told me, as a secret, sir, that Sir Henry always sleeps every night with a bare drawn sword under his pillow, and a couple of loaded pistols stuck into the watch-pockets, as they call 'em, and frightens my lady to death with his pranks!"

I could scarcely believe what they were telling me.

"Why, my boy, I cannot believe that all this is true!"

"'Deed, sir, we wish as how it warn't!"

"How long have *you* known it?"

"Only a day back or so."

"And why did not you set off for London, and tell ——?"

"Lord, sir, *us* spread about that Sir Henry was mad! Nobody would believe us, for he's woundy cunning, and can talk as grave as a judge, and as good as the parson, when he chooses! an' that being so, if we'd gone up to town with them stories, the great folk would ha' come down, and he'd a' persuaded them it was all false—and what would have become of *we?*"

"And what is become of the servants? Are they all dumb?"

"Yes, sir, in a manner, seeing as how they have been bound to silence by our poor lady, till she should tell them to give the alarm; and *he's* been

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too cunning latterly to give her opportunity of doing so. She'll be main glad o' your coming, I'll warrant me, for scarce a fly dare leave the house but he'd be after it!"

"Drive on—drive on, boys, for your lives!" said I, finding we had at length surmounted the hill, and directed them to go at once to the house of Mr Courthrope. Indeed there was not a moment to be lost, for it was clear that the madman's suspicions were roused, indefinite as might be his apprehensions; and his cunning and violence, each equally to be dreaded, might prompt him to take some dangerous, if not fatal step, in my absence. Fortunately I found Mr Courthrope at home, and immeasurably shocked he was at my intelligence. It seemed that the baronet and he had been totally estranged for some months, owing to an affront, which he was now satisfied arose out of his unhappy relative's insanity. Our arrangements were soon made. We exchanged the chariot in which I had returned to town, for a commodious carriage, calculated to hold four or five persons, and drove off at once to the residence of Dr Y——, one of the most eminent "mad-doctors," as they are somewhat unceremoniously denominated. Our interview was but brief. In less than half an hour, Dr Y——, Mr Courthrope, and I, with two keepers, deposited ourselves respectively within and without the vehicle, and set off direct for —— Hall.

Mr Courthrope and I were sad enough; but little Dr Y—— was calm and lively, as if he were obeying an invitation to dinner!

"Suppose Harleigh should grow desperate—should offer resistance!" said Mr Courthrope, very pale.

"Nothing more likely," replied Dr Y—— coolly.

"But what is to be done? My cousin was always an athletic man; and now that the strength of madness"——

"Poh, my dear sir, he would be but as a child in the hands of those two fellows of mine outside—like a wild elephant between two tame ones—ha, ha!"

"*You*, I dare say, have witnessed so many of those scenes," said I, with a faint smile—for his indifference hurt me; it jarred upon my excited feelings.

"For Heaven's sake—for Lady Anne's sake, Dr Y——," said Mr Courthrope agitatedly, as a sudden turn of the road brought us in sight of —— Hall, "let nothing like violence be used."

"Oh! most assuredly not. 'Tis a system I always eschewed. Never do by foul, what may be accomplished by fair means. Our conduct will be regulated to a hair, by that of Sir Henry. Only leave him to us, and, by hook or by crook, we'll secure him."

"But, suppose he should have firearms," said I; "I know he carries them,—he pointed a loaded pistol at me this morning."

"My dear doctor, how did you know it was *loaded*? 'Tis what one would have called at the schools a gratuitous assumption! Madmen have a vast *penchant* for terrifying with firearms; but somehow they always forget the ammunition!"

"But only put the case; suppose Sir Henry should have got possession of a pistol, ready loaded to his hand!"

"Certainly, in such a case, something awkward might occur," replied Dr Y—— seriously; "but I trust a good deal to the effect of my eye upon him from the first. 'Tis a kind of talisman among my patients—ha, ha!"

"Poor Lady Anne!" exclaimed Mr Courthrope, "what will become of her?"

"Ah! she must be *reasoned* with, and kept out of the way; otherwise we may expect a *scene*, a thing I've a particular dislike to!" replied matter-of-fact Dr Y——.

Now, there was a certain something about this my professional brother that was intolerable to me; a calm, self-satisfied air, a smirking civility of tone and manner, that, coupled with his truly dreadful calling, and the melancholy enterprise which he at present conducted, really revolted me. How doleful, how odious, would be the jocularity of Jack Ketch! And again, when

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the doctor, who was a well-bred man, saw the sickening agitation of his two companions, there was an artificial adaptation of his manner, in the tones of his voice, and the expression of his features, that offended me, because one felt it to be assumed, in consideration of our weakness! He was, however, in his way, a celebrated and successful man, and, I believe, deserved to be so.

In due time we reached the park gates, and Dr Y——, Mr Courthrope, and I, there alighted, directing the carriage to follow us at a leisurely pace to the hall door. I rang the bell; and, after waiting nearly a minute or two, an elderly woman answered our summons.

"Can we see Sir Henry Harleigh?" inquired Mr Courthrope.

"No, sir," was the prompt reply.

"And why not? My good woman, we *must* see Sir Henry immediately, on business of the highest importance."

"Indeed! Then you should have come a little earlier!"

"Come a little earlier?" said I; "what do you mean? Sir Henry himself appointed this evening."

"Then it's clear he must have changed his mind; for he and my lady both set off in a post-chaise and four some two hours ago, howsomever, and I don't know where, either; perhaps you had better go after him!"

We stood looking at one another in amazement.

"In what direction did he go?" I inquired.

"Down the road, sir. He desired me to tell any one that might call that he was gone off to Wales."

I sighed with vexation and alarm; Mr Courthrope looked pale with apprehension; while Dr Y——, with his eyes half-closed, stood looking with a smiling inquisitiveness at the confident woman that was addressing us. A pretty stand-still were we arrived at! What was now to be done?

"Here!" said Dr Y—— in an under tone, beckoning us to follow him to a little distance from the door. We did so.

"Poh, poh!" he whispered, taking our arms into his—"The woman is trifling with us. Sir Henry is at this moment in the Hall—ay, as surely as we are now here!"

"Indeed! How can you possibly"——

"Ah, he must be very clever, either sane or insane, that can deceive *me* in these matters! 'Tis all a trick of Sir Henry's—I'll lay my life on't. The woman did not tell her tale naturally enough. Come, we'll search the Hall, however, before we go back again on a fool's errand! Come, my good woman," said he, as we reascended the steps, "you have not told us the truth. We happen to know that the baronet and his lady are at this moment above stairs, for we saw him just now at the corner of the window."

This cool invention confounded the woman, and she began to hesitate. "Come," pursued our spokesman, "you had better be candid; for *we* will be so—and tell you we are determined to search this Hall from one end to the other, from top to bottom—but we will find him we come to seek; it may be all the better for those who'll save us time and trouble," he added significantly.

"Oh, lord!" replied the woman, with an air of vexation, "you must do as you please, gentlemen—I've given you my answer, and you'll take the consequences."

With this she left us. After a short consultation, Mr Courthrope volunteered to go through the principal rooms alone. In about ten minutes' time he returned, not having seen anything of the fugitives, except a letter lying on the library table, in the baronet's frank, *the ink of which was scarcely dry*. This satisfied us of the falsehood of the woman's story. It proved only, however, a blank envelope. We determined together to commence a strict search over the whole Hall. Every room, however, we explored in vain, and began to despair of success. The back drawing-room we examined again, hoping to find some note or letter that might give us a clue to the baronet's retreat. It

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commanded a fine view of the grounds; and after standing for some moments at the window, narrowly scrutinising every shrub or tree that we could fancy Sir Henry lurking either in or near, we turned together in council once more. Where could he be? Had he really left the place? We cast our eyes on the mantelpiece and table, on which were scattered various papers, notes, cards, &c., and one or two volumes, with the baronet's manuscript notes in the margin—and sighed. This, Mr Courthrope informed us, was Sir Henry's favourite room, because of the prospect it commanded. We could, however, see nothing to cast a ray of information upon the subject of our inquiries. We determined, then, to commence a rigorous search of the outer premises, but were delayed for a time by the violence of the storm. The afternoon had been very gloomy, and at length the rain came down in torrents. The thunder rattled directly overhead, in fearful proximity, followed in a second or two by lightning of terrible vividness. Peal upon peal, flash after flash, amid the continued hissing of the hail and heavy rain, followed one another with scarce a minute's intermission. Nothing attracted the eye without, but the drenched gloomy grounds, and the angry lightning-laden sky: a prospect this, which, coupled with thoughts of the melancholy errand on which we were engaged, completely depressed our spirits—at least I can answer for my own.

"Gloomy enough work this, both within and without!" exclaimed Dr Y——. "If Sir Henry is travelling, he will be cooled a little, I imagine."

"What can he have done with Lady Anne? I tremble for her safety!" exclaimed Mr Courthrope.

"Oh, you may depend she's safely stowed somewhere or other! These madmen are crafty beyond"—said Dr Y——, when the doors of an old-fashioned oaken cabinet, which we had examined, but imagined locked, were suddenly thrown wide open, and forth stepped the baronet, in travelling costume, with a composed haughty air.

"Gentlemen," said he calmly, "are you aware of the consequences of what you are doing? Do you know that I am Sir Henry Harleigh, and that this happens to be my house? By what warrant—at whose command—do you thus presume to intrude upon my privacy?"

He paused, his hand continuing extended towards us with a commanding air. His attitude and bearing were most striking. The suddenness of his appearance completely astounded Mr Courthrope and myself, but not so Dr Y——, the experienced Dr Y——! who, with a confident bow and smile, stepped forward to meet Sir Henry almost at the moment of his extraordinary *entrée*, just as if he had been awaiting it. Never, in my life, did I witness such a specimen of consummate self-possession.

"Sir Henry, you have relieved us," said Dr Y——, with animation, "from infinite embarrassment; we have been searching for you in every corner of the house!"

"You have been—*searching*—for me, sir! Your name?" exclaimed the baronet, with mingled hauteur and astonishment, stepping back a pace or two, and drawing himself up to his full height.

"*Pray*, Sir Henry, relieve us, by saying where her ladyship is to be found!" pursued the imperturbable Dr Y——. I could scarce tell why, but I *felt* that the doctor had mastered the madman—as if by magic. The poor baronet's unsteady eye wandered from Dr Y—— to me, and from me to Mr Courthrope.

"Once more, sir, I beg the favour of your name?" he repeated, not, however, with his former firmness.

"Dr Y——," replied that gentleman promptly, bowing low.

The baronet started. "Dr Y——, of ———?" he whispered, after a pause, in a low thrilling tone.

"Precisely—the same, at your service, Sir Henry," replied the doctor, again bowing. Sir Henry's features whitened sensibly. He turned aside, as if he could not bear to look upon Dr Y——, and sunk into a chair be-

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side him, murmuring, "Then I am ruined!"

"Do not, Sir Henry, distress yourself!" said Dr Y—— mildly, approaching him—but he was motioned off with an air of disgust. Sir Henry's averted countenance was full of horror. We stood perfectly silent and motionless, in obedience to the hushing signals of Dr Y——.

"George," said Sir Henry, addressing Mr Courthrope in a faltering tone, "*You* are not my enemy"——

"Dear, dear Henry!" exclaimed Mr Courthrope, running towards him, and grasping his hand, while the tears nearly overflowed.

"Go and bring Lady Anne hither!" said the baronet, his face still averted; "you will find her in the summer-house awaiting my return."

Mr Courthrope, after an affirmative nod from Dr Y—— and myself, hurried off on his errand, and in a few moments returned, accompanied—or rather preceded by Lady Anne, who, in a travelling-dress, flew up the grand staircase, burst open the doors, and rushed into the room almost shrieking, "Where—where is he? Dear, dear Henry! my husband! What have they done to you? Whither are they going to take you? Oh, wretch!" she groaned, turning towards me her pale, beautiful countenance, full of desperation, "is all this *your* doing?—Love! love!" addressing her husband—who never once moved from the posture in which he had first placed himself in the chair, "I am your wife! Your own Anne!" and she flung her arms round his neck, kissing him with frantic vehemence.

"I thought we should have a scene!" whispered Dr Y—— in my ear; "'twas very wrong in me to permit her coming! Pray be calm, my lady," said he, "do, for God's sake—for pity's sake—be calm," he continued, apparently unnoticed by Sir Henry, whose eyes were fixed on the floor, as if he were in profound meditation. "You will only aggravate his sufferings!"

"Oh yes, yes!" she gasped, "I'll be calm!—I am so!—There!—I am very calm now!" and she strained her grasp of Sir Henry with convulsive violence—he all the while passive in her arms as a statue! Dr Y—— looked embarrassed. "This will never do—we shall have Sir Henry becoming unmanageable," he whispered.

"Can I say a single word to your ladyship, alone?" he inquired softly.

"No—no—no—!" she replied, with mournful vehemence, through her closed teeth—"you shall NEVER part me from my husband! Shall they, love! dearest?" and losing her embrace for a moment, she looked him in the face with an expression of agonising tenderness, and suddenly reclasped her arms around him with the energy of despair.

"Speak to her ladyship—calm her—*you* alone have the power," said Dr Y——, addressing Sir Henry, with the air of a man who expects to be—who *knows* that he will be obeyed. His voice seemed to recall the baronet from a reverie, or rather rouse him from a state of stupor, and he tenderly folded his lady in his arms, saying fondly, "Hush, hush, dearest! I will protect you!"

"There! there! did you hear him? Were these the words of—of—a—madman?" almost shrieked Lady Anne.

"Hush, Anne! my love! my dearest, sweetest Anne! They say we must part!" exclaimed the wretched husband, in tones of thrilling pathos, wiping away the tears that showered from his poor wife's eyes—"but 'tis only for a while"——

"They *never* shall! they NEVER shall! I won't—I won't—won't," she sobbed hysterically. He folded her closer in his arms, and looking solemnly upwards, repeated the words—

> Angels—ever bright and fair—
> Take—oh take her to your care!

He then burst into a loud laugh, relaxed his hold, and his wretched wife fell, swooning, into the arms of Mr Courthrope, who instantly carried her from the room.

"Now, Sir Henry—not a moment is to be lost," said Dr Y——. "Our carriage is at the door—you must step into it, and accompany us to town.

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Her ladyship will follow soon after, in your own carriage."

He rose and buttoned his surtout.

"What," said he eagerly, "has his Majesty *really* sent for me, and in a friendly spirit? But," addressing me with a mysterious air, "you've not betrayed me, have you?"

"Never—and never can I, dear Sir Henry," I replied with energy.

"Then I at once attend you, Dr Y——. Royalty must not be trifled with. I suppose you have the sign-manual?" Dr Y—— nodded; and without a further inquiry after Lady Anne, Sir Henry accompanied us down stairs, took his hat and walking-stick from the hall stand, drew on his gloves, and, followed by Dr Y——, stepped into the carriage, which set off at a rapid rate, and was soon out of sight. I hastened, with a heavy heart, to the chamber whither Lady Anne had been conducted. Why should I attempt to dilate upon the sufferings I there witnessed—to exhibit my wretched patient writhing on the rack of torture? Sweet, suffering lady! Your sorrows are recorded above! Fain would I draw a curtain between your intense agonies and the cold scrutiny of the unsympathising world!

From Lady Anne's maid I gathered a dreadful corroboration of the intelligence I had obtained in the morning. True I found it to be, that every domestic, except herself and the cook, had been dismissed by the despotic baronet—the former retaining her place solely through the peremptoriness of his lady, the latter from necessity. Why did not the disbanded servants spread the alarm?—was explained by the consummate cunning with which Sir Henry, to the last, concealed his more violent extravagances, and the address with which he fixed upon Lady Anne the imputation of insanity, alleging frequently as the cause of dismissing his servants, his anxiety to prevent their witnessing the humiliation of his lady. More effectually to secure himself impunity, he had supplied them liberally with money, and sent them into Wales! On one occasion he had detected Sims—the maid—in the act of running from the Hall, with the determination, at all hazards, of disclosing the fearful thraldom in which they were kept by the madman; but he seemed apprised of her movements—she fancied even of her intentions—as if by magic:—met her at the Hall gates, and threatened to shoot her, unless she instantly returned, and on her knees took an oath of secresy for the future. He would not allow a stranger or visitor of any description, under any pretence, to enter the precincts of the Hall, or any member of his family, except as above mentioned, to quit them. He had prayers three times a-day, and walked in procession every day at noon round the house—himself, his lady, her maid, and the cook; with many other freaks of a similar nature. He got up at night and paraded with firearms about his grounds! I understood that these palpable evidences of insanity had made their appearance only for a few days before the one on which I had been summoned. Sir Henry, I found, had always been looked upon as an eccentric man; and he had tact enough to procure his unfortunate *Lady* the sympathy of his household, on the score of imbecility. After giving the maid such general directions as suggested themselves, to procure an immediate supply of attendants, and to have the neighbouring apothecary called in on the slightest emergency—and enjoining her to devote herself entirely to her unhappy lady—I returned to her chamber. The slight noise I made in opening and shutting the door, startled her ladyship from the brief doze into which she had fallen a few minutes before I quitted her bedside. She continued in a state of lamentable exhaustion; and finding the soothing draught I had ordered for her was beginning to exhibit its drowsy agency, I resigned my patient into the hands of the apothecary whom I had sent for, and hastened up to town by one of the London coaches, which happened to overtake me.

Late in the evening Mr Courthrope called at my house, and informed me that they had a dreadful journey up to town. For the first mile or two the

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baronet, he said, appeared absorbed in thought. He soon, however, began to grow restless—then violent—and ultimately almost unmanageable. He broke one of the carriage windows to atoms, and almost strangled one of the keepers, whom it was found necessary to summon to their assistance, by suddenly thrusting his hand into his neckerchief. He insisted on the horses' heads being turned towards the Hall; and finding they paid no attention to his wishes, began to utter the most lamentable cries—which attracted many persons to the carriage. On reaching Somerfield House, the private establishment of Dr Y——, whither it was thought advisable, in the first instance, to convey the baronet, till other arrangements could be made—he became suddenly quiet. He trembled violently—his face became pale as ashes, and he offered no opposition to his being led at once from the carriage into the house. He imagined it was the Tower. He sat in silent moodiness for a length of time, and then requested the attendance of a chaplain and a solicitor. In a private interview with the former, he fell down upon his knees, confessing that he had several times attempted the life of Lady Anne, though he declared with solemn asseverations that he was innocent of *treason* in any shape. He owned, with a contrite air, that justice had at length overtaken him in his evil career. He imagined, it seemed, as far as they could gather from his exclamations, that he had that morning murdered his lady! On Mr Courthrope taking leave of him for the evening, he wrung his hands, with the bitterness of a condemned criminal who is parting with his friends for ever, and in smothered accents warned him to resist the indulgence of unbridled passions!

Well, a singular—a woeful day's work had I gone through; and I thanked God that—putting out of the question all other considerations—I had not suffered personal injury from the madman. How horrid was my suspense, at several periods of the day, lest he should suddenly produce firearms, and destroy either himself or his persecutors! Alas, how soon might I expect the distressing secret to make its appearance in the daily newspapers, to become the subject of curiosity and heartless speculation! I resigned myself to rest that night, full of melancholy apprehensions for Lady Anne, as well as the baronet; and my last fervent thoughts were of thankfulness to God for the preservation of my own reason hitherto, under all the troubles, anxieties, and excitements I had passed through in life!

I determined, on rising in the morning, to make such arrangements as would leave me at liberty to pay an early visit to Lady Anne; and was on the point of stepping into my chariot, to hurry through my morning round, when a carriage rolled rapidly to the door, and in a few seconds I observed her maid handing out Lady Anne Harleigh. Deeply veiled as she was, and muffled in an ample shawl, I saw at once the fearful traces of her yesterday's agony and exhaustion in her countenance and feeble tottering gait. She almost swooned with the effort of reaching the parlour. I soon learned her object in hurrying thus to town; it was to carry into effect an unalterable determination—poor lady!—to attend personally on Sir Henry—even in the character of his menial servant. It was perfectly useless for me to expostulate—she listened with impatience, and even replied with asperity.

"For mercy's sake, doctor, why do you persist in talking thus? Do you wish to see me share the fate of my unhappy husband? You choke me—you suffocate me!—I cannot breathe!" she gasped.

"Dearest Lady Anne!" said I, taking in mine her cold white hand—"try to overcome your feelings! My heart aches for you, indeed; but a solemn sense of duty forbids me to yield to you in this matter. You might gratify your excited feelings for the moment, by seeing Sir Henry; but I take God to witness the truth with which I assure you, that in my belief, such a step would destroy the only chance left for his recovery. The constant presence of your ladyship would

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have the effect of inflaming still more his disordered, his excited feelings, till his malady would defy all control —and Heaven only knows what would be the consequences, as well to him as to yourself." I paused; she did not reply.

"I thank God that he enables your ladyship to listen to reason in these trying circumstances. Rely upon it, Providence will strengthen you, and you will prove equal to this emergency!"

"Oh, doctor," she murmured, clasping her hands over her face, "you cannot sympathise with me; you cannot feel how wretched—how desolate I am! What will become of me? Whither shall I go to forget myself? Oh, my child—my child—my child!" she groaned, and fell back senseless. It was long before our attentions succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. What an object she lay in my wife's arms! Her beautiful features were cold and white as those of a marble bust; the dew of agony was on her brow; her hair was all dishevelled; and thus, prostrate and heart-broken, she looked one on whom misfortune had dealt her heaviest blow! As soon as she was sufficiently recovered, she yielded to my wife's entreaties, and suffered herself to be conducted up to bed, and promised there to await my return, when I would bring her tidings of Sir Henry. In two or three hours' time, I was able to call at Somerfield House. I found from Dr Y——, who told me that such cases were always fluctuating, that Sir Henry's demeanour had undergone a sudden change. He had, from great violence and boisterousness, sunk into contemplative calmness and melancholy. On entering his chamber—where there was every comfort and elegance suited to his station—I found him seated at a desk writing. He received me courteously; and but for that strange wildness of the eye, of which no madman can divest himself, there was no appearance of the awful change which had come over him.

"You may retire, sir, for the present," said the baronet to his keeper, who, looking significantly at me, bowed and withdrew.

"Well, Sir Henry," said I, drawing my chair to the table at which he was sitting—"I hope your present residence is made as comfortable as circumstances"——

"I neither deserve nor desire anything agreeable," he replied gloomily. "I know—I feel it all; I am conscious of my deep degradation; but of the particular offence for which I am arrested, I solemnly declare that I am innocent. However," he concluded abruptly, "I must not be diverted from what I am doing," and inclining politely towards me, he resumed his pen. I sat watching him in silence for some minutes. He seemed to be unconscious of my presence, completely absorbed with what he was doing. I was turning about in my mind how I could best introduce the topic I wished, when he suddenly asked me, without removing his eyes from the paper, how I had left Lady Anne.

"I am glad you ask after her, Sir Henry—for she is afraid you are offended with her."

"Not at all—not the least! It is surely *I* who am the offender," he replied with a sigh.

"Indeed! her ladyship does not think so, however! She is in town, at my house; will you permit me to bring her here?"

"Why, why, do the regulations of this place admit of females coming?" he asked, with a puzzled air, proceeding to ask in a breath, "has anything further transpired?"

"Nothing," I replied, not knowing to what he alluded.

"Will she be calm?"

"Why otherwise, Sir Henry?"

"Or object to your being present all the while?"

"No; I am sure she will not."

"Mind—I cannot bear her to bring any bells with her!"

"Rely upon it, Sir Henry, you shall not be annoyed."

"Well, then, I beg you will leave me for the present, that I may prepare for the interview. Had we not better engage a short-hand writer to attend? You know she might say something of moment."

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"We will see that everything is arranged. In two hours' time, Sir Henry, then, you will be prepared?"

He bowed, resumed his pen, and I withdrew. There seemed little to be apprehended from the interview, provided he retained his present humour, and Lady Anne could overcome her agitation, and control her feelings.

On returning home, I found her ladyship had risen, and was sitting with my wife, in tears—but more composed than I had left her. I told her how calm and contented Sir Henry appeared—and the satisfaction with which he received the proposal of her visit: she clasped her hands together, and assured me, with a faint hysteric laugh, how *very* happy she was! Presently she began to convince me that I need be under no apprehension for her—and repeated her conviction that she should preserve a perfect composure in Sir Henry's presence, over and over again, with such increasing vehemence, as ended in a violent fit of hysterics. My heart heavily misgave me for the event of the interview—however, there was now nothing for it but to try the experiment.

About six o'clock, her ladyship, together with her sister, Lady Julia ——, who had been hastily summoned from the country, and Mr Courthrope, drove with me to Somerfield House. They were all shown into the drawing-room, where Dr Y—— and I left them, that we might prepare his patient for the visit. Dr Y—— saw no objection to the whole party being admitted; so, in a moment's time, we introduced the wretched couple to one another.

"Ah, Henry!" exclaimed Lady Anne, the moment she saw him, rushing into his arms—where she lay for a while silent and motionless. I suspected she had fainted.

"Julia, is that you? How are you?" inquired the baronet, with an easy air, still holding his wife in his arms. She sobbed violently. "Hush, Anne, hush!"—he whispered. "You *must* be calm; they allow no noise here of any kind. They will order you to leave the room!—Besides—you disturb *me*—so that I shall never be able to get through the interview!" All this was said with the coolest composure; as if he were quite unconscious of being the object of his wife's agonising attentions. Her sobs, however, became louder and louder. "Silence, Anne!" said the baronet sternly; "this is foolish!" Her arms instantly fell from around him, for she had swooned—and I bore her from the room—begging the others to continue till my return. I soon restored my suffering patient by a potent draught of sal-volatile and water—and enabled her once more to return to her husband's presence. We were all seated—but conversation languished.

"It is now my bitter duty," said the baronet, with a serious air, breaking the oppressing silence, "to explain the whole mystery. Have you firmness, Anne, to bear it?"—She nodded——"And in the presence of so many persons?" Again she nodded—to speak was impossible.

"Perhaps we had better leave?" said I.

"No—not one of you, unless you wish. The more witnesses of truth the better," replied the baronet—proceeding with much solemnity of manner—"I am not—I never was—a dishonourable man; yet I fear it will be difficult to persuade you to believe me, when you shall have heard all. The dreadful secret, however, must come out; I feel that my recent conduct requires explanation—that disguise is no longer practicable, or availing. The hand of God has brought me hither, and is heavy upon me—you see before you a wretch whom He has marked with a curse heavier than that of Cain!"

He paused for a moment, and turned over the leaves of his manuscript, as if preparing to read from them. We all looked and listened with unfeigned astonishment. There was something about his manner that positively made me begin to doubt the fact of his insanity—and I was almost prepared to hear him acknowledge that, for some mysterious purpose or another, he had but been feigning madness. Lady Anne, pale and motionless as a statue, sat near him, her eyes riveted

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upon him with a dreadful expression of blended fondness, agony, and apprehension.

"Behold, then, in me," continued Sir Henry, in a stern undertone—"an IMPOSTOR. The world will soon ring with the story; friends will despise me; the House of Commons will repudiate me; relatives will disown me; my wife even"—raising his eyes towards her—"will forsake me; I am no baronet"—he paused—he was evidently striving to stifle strong emotions—"I have no right either to the title, which I have disgraced—the fortune, which I have wantonly squandered—the hand, which I have dishonoured." His lips, despite his efforts at compression, quivered, and his cheeks turned ashy pale. "But I take God to witness, that at the time of my marriage with this noble lady," pointing with a trembling hand to Lady Anne, "I knew not what I know now about this matter—that *another* was entitled to stand in my place, and enjoy the wealth and honours—what—does it not, then, confound you all?"—he inquired, finding that we neither looked nor uttered surprise at what he said—"Nothing like agitation at the confession? Is it, then, *no news?* Are you all prepared for it? Has, then, my privacy—my confidence—been violated? How is this, Lady Anne?" he pursued with increasing vehemence—"Tell me, Lady Anne, is it *you* who have done this?" The poor lady forced a faint smile into her pallid features—a smile of fond incredulity. "Ha! cockatrice! away"——he shouted, springing from his chair, and pacing about the room in violent agitation. Lady Anne, with a faint shriek, was borne out of the room a second time insensible.

"Yes," continued the baronet, in a high tone, regardless of the presence of his keeper, whom his violence had hurried back into the room, "that false woman has betrayed me to disgrace and ruin! She has possessed herself of my fatal secret, and turned it to my destruction! But for her it might have slept hitherto! Ha! this is the secret that has so long lain rankling at my heart—blighting my reason—driving me to crime—making my continual companion—the devil—the great fiend himself—and hell all around me! Oh, I am choked! I am burnt up! I cannot bear it! What, Dr Y——, have *you* nothing to say to me, now you have secured me in your toils? Are you leagued with Lady Anne? *Lady* Anne!—*Lady!—she* will preserve her title, but it will be attached to the name of a villain! Ah! what will become of me! Speak, Dr ——," addressing me, who had turned to whisper to Mr Courthrope, "speak to me."

"While you are raving thus, it would be useless, Sir Henry"——

"*Sir* Henry! Do you then dare to mock me to my face?" He paused, stopped full before me, and seemed meditating to strike me. Dr Y—— came beside me, and the wretched madman instantly turned on his heel, and walked to another part of the room. Again he commenced walking to and fro, his arms folded, and muttering—"The Commons, I suppose, will be impeaching me—ha, ha, ha!—and thus ends Sir Henry Harleigh, Baronet, member for the county of ——! Ah, ha, ha! What will X——, and Y——, and Z——," naming well-known individuals in the Lower House, "what will they say to this! What will my constituents say! They will give me a public dinner again! The pride of the county will be there to meet me!"

Mr Courthrope caused Lady Anne and her sister, as soon as the former could be removed with safety, to be conveyed to his own residence, which they reached, happily at the same time that Mrs Courthrope—one of Lady Anne's intimate friends—returned from the country, to pay her suffering relative every attention that delicacy and affection could suggest. What *now* was the situation of this once happy—this once brilliant—this once envied couple! Sir Henry—in a madhouse; Lady Anne—heart-broken, and, like Rachael, "refusing to be comforted!" All splendour faded—the sweets of wealth, rank,

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refinement, loathed! What a commentary on the language of the Royal Sufferer in scripture—"And in my prosperity I said, I shall *never* be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."*

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The ravings of Sir Henry, on the occasion last mentioned, of course passed away from my recollection, with many other of his insane extravagances, till they were suddenly revived by the following paragraph in a morning paper, which some days afterwards I read breathlessly and incredulously:—

"We understand that the lamentable estrangement, both from reason and society, of a once popular and accomplished baronet, is at length discovered to be connected with some extraordinary disclosures made to him some time ago concerning the tenure by which he at present enjoys all his large estates, and the title, as it is contended, wrongfully. The new claimant, who, it is said, has not been long in this country, and is in comparatively humble circumstances, has intrusted the prosecution of his rights to an eminent solicitor, who, it is whispered, has at length shaped his client's case in a form fit for the investigation of a court of law; and a very formidable case, we hear, it is reported will be made out. If it should be successful, the present unfortunate possessor, in addition to being stripped of all he holds in the world, will have to account for several hundred thousand pounds of rents. The extensive and distinguished connexions of Sir ——, have, we understand, been thrown into the utmost consternation, and have secured, at an enormous expense, the highest legal assistance in the country."

Wonder, pity, alarm, perplexity, by turns assailed me, on reading this extraordinary annunciation, which squared with every word uttered by the baronet on the occasion I have alluded to, and which we had considered the mere hallucination of a madman. Could, then, this dreadful—this mysterious paragraph—have any foundation in fact? Was it *this* that had shaken, and finally overturned, Sir Henry's understanding? And did Lady Anne know it? Good God, what was to become of them? Would this forthwith become the topic of conversation and discussion, and my miserable patients be dragged from the sacred retreats of sorrow and suffering, to become the subjects of general inquiry and speculation? Alas, by how slight a tenure does man hold the highest advantages of life!

I had proposed calling at Mr Courthrope's that day, to see Lady Anne. I should possibly have an opportunity, therefore, of ascertaining whether this newly-discovered calamity constituted an ingredient of that "perilous stuff" which weighed upon her heart.

What an alteration had a fortnight worked on Lady Anne! In her bedchamber, when I entered, were her sister, Lady Julia, Mrs Courthrope, and her maid; the latter of whom was propping up her mistress in bed with pillows. How wan was her once lovely face—how wasted her figure! There was a tearless agony in her eye, a sorrowful resignation in her countenance, that spoke feelingly the

> Cruel grief that hack'd away her heart,
> Unseen, unknown of others!

"What intelligence do you bring from Somerfield to-day doctor?" she whispered, after replying to my inquiries about her health.

"I have not seen him to-day, but I hear that he continues calm. His bodily health is unexceptionable."

"Is that a favourable sign?" she inquired faintly, shaking her head, as though she knew to the contrary.

"It may be, and it *may* not, according to circumstances. But how is your ladyship to-day?"

"Oh, so *much* better! I really feel getting quite strong—don't *you* think so, Julia?" said the feeble sufferer. Lady Julia sighed in silence.

"I shall be able to get about in a

* Psalm, xxx. 6, 7.

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few days," continued Lady Anne, "and then—don't be so angry, Julia! —once at Somerfield—I—I know I shall revive again! I know I shall die if you do not give me my way. Do, dear doctor," her snowy attenuated fingers gently seized and compressed my hand,—"do persuade them to be reasonable! You can't think how they torment me about it! They don't know what my feelings are"—— She could utter no more. I endeavoured to pacify her with a general promise, that if she would keep herself from fretting for a fortnight, and was then sufficiently recovered, I would endeavour to bring about what she wished.

"Poor Sir Henry," said I, after a pause, addressing Lady Julia, "takes strange notions into his head."

"Indeed he does!" she replied sadly; "what new delusion has made its appearance?"

"Oh, nothing new; he adheres to the belief that he is not the true baronet; that he has no title to the fortune he holds!" No one made any reply; and I felt infinitely chagrined and embarrassed on account of having alluded to it. I mentioned another subject, but in vain.

"Doctor, you must know it to be true, that there is another who claims my husband's title and fortune!" whispered Lady Anne, a few minutes afterwards. I endeavoured to smile it off.

"*You* smile, doctor; but my poor husband found it no occasion for smiling." She sobbed hysterically. "And what if it is true," she continued, "that we are beggars—that my child—oh! —I could bear it all if my poor Henry"——her lips continued moving, without uttering any sound; and it was plain she had fainted. I bitterly regretted mentioning the subject; but we had frequently talked about other crotchets of Sir Henry's by his lady's bedside, without calling forth any particular emotion on her part. No allusion of any kind had been since made to the topics about which Sir Henry raved on the last occasion of Lady Anne's seeing him, by any member of the family; and I thought my mentioning it would prove either that Lady Anne was in happy ignorance of the circumstances, or that they constituted a chief source of her wasting misery. The latter, alas! proved to be the case! She lay for some minutes rather like a delicate waxen figure before us, than actual flesh and blood. Never did I see any one fade so rapidly; but what anguish had been hers for a long period! And this poor wasted sufferer was relying upon being the nurse of her husband in a fortnight's time! Oh, cruel delusion! I left her, apprehensive that instead of matters assuming a more favourable aspect, a fortnight would see her more than halfway towards the grave.

"Doctor," whispered Lady Julia to me, as I descended the stairs, "have you seen that frightful paragraph in this day's newspaper?"

"I have, my lady, and"——

"So has my poor sister!" interrupted her ladyship. "We generally read over the newspapers before they are shown to her, as she insists on seeing them; but this morning it unfortunately happened that Sims took it up to her at once. Poor girl! she soon saw the fatal paragraph, and I thought she would have died."

"Indeed—indeed, my lady, I never can forgive myself," said I, wringing my hands.

"Nay, docter, you are wrong. I am glad you have broken the ice; she must be talked to on the subject, but we dared not begin."

"Pray, how long has her ladyship known of it?"

"I believe about six months after Sir Henry became alarmed about it; for, at first, he disbelieved it, and paid no attention to it whatever. He was never aware, however, that she knew the secret source of his anxiety and illness; and as she saw him so bent on concealing it from her, she thought it more prudent to acquiesce. Fancy, doctor, what my poor sister must have suffered! She is the noblest creature in the world, and could have borne that which has almost killed her husband, and quite destroyed his reason. People have noticed often his strange manner; and circulated a hundred

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stories to the discredit of both, which Anne has endured without a murmur, often when her heart was near breaking! Alas! I am afraid she will sink at last!" She hurried from me, overcome by her emotions, and I drove off, not much less oppressed myself.

During the next few weeks, I visited, almost daily, both Sir Henry and Lady Anne. It was a dreadful period for the former, whose malady broke out into the most violent paroxysms, rendering necessary restraints of a very severe character. Who could have believed that he was looking on the once gay, handsome, accomplished, gifted baronet, in the howling maniac, whom I once or twice shuddered to see chained to a staple in the wall, or fastened down on an iron-fixed chair, his head close shaven, his eyes bloodshot and staring, his mouth distorted, uttering the most tremendous imprecations! I cannot describe the emotions that agitated me as I passed from this frightful figure to the bedside of the peaceful, declining sufferer, his wife, buoying her up from time to time with accounts of his improvement! How I trembled as I told the falsehood.

Sir Henry's bodily health, however, presently improved; his flesh remained firm; the wilder paroxysms ceased, and soon assumed a mitigated form. In his eye was the expression of settled insanity! I confess I began to think, with the experienced Dr Y——, that there was little reasonable hope of recovery. His case assumed a different aspect almost daily. He wandered on from delusion to delusion, each more absurd than the other, and more tenaciously retained. On one occasion, after great boisterousness, he became suddenly calm, called for twenty quires of foolscap, and commenced writing from morning to night, without intermission, except for his meals. This, however, remained with him for nearly three weeks, and the result proved to be a speech for the House of Commons, vindicating his alleged ill-treatment of Lady Anne, and his claims to his title and estates! It must have taken nearly a fortnight to deliver! He insisted on his keeper, a very easy-tempered phlegmatic fellow, hearing him read the whole—good occupation for a week—when the baronet tired in the middle of his task. He always paused on my entrance; and when I once requested him to proceed in my presence, he declined, with a great air of offended dignity. I several times introduced the name of Lady Anne, curious to see its effect upon him; he heard it with indifference, once observing, "that he had formed a plan about her which would not a little astonish certain persons." I represented her feebleness—her emaciation. He said coldly that he was sorry for it, but she had brought it upon herself, quoting the words, "Thus even-handed justice," &c. He adopted a mode of dress that was remarkably ridiculous, and often provoked me to laughter in spite of myself, and all my melancholy feelings concerning him—a suit of tightly fitting jacket and pantaloons, made of green baize, with silk stockings and pumps. His figure was very elegant and well proportioned, but in this costume, and with his hair cut close upon his head, looked most painfully absurd. *This* was Sir Henry Harleigh, Baronet, M.P. for the county of ——, husband of the beautiful Lady Anne ——, master of most accomplishments, and owner of a splendid fortune! Thus habited, I have surprised him, mounted on a table in the corner of his room, haranguing his quiet keeper, with all the vehemence of parliamentary oratory; and on my entrance he would sneak down with the silliest air of schoolboy sheepishness! He became very tractable, took his meals regularly, and walked about in a secluded part of the grounds, without being mischievous or attempting to escape. And who shall say that he was not even *happy*? Barring a degradation, of which only *others* were sensible, what had he to trouble him? Where, in this respect, lay the difference between Sir Henry, wandering from delusion to delusion, revelling in variety,



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and the poet, who always lives in a world of dreams and fancies all his own? Is it not a most merciful provision that the sufferer of this, the most awful of misfortunes, should be not only quite unconscious of it, but even happy in his delusion!

And Lady Anne—the beautiful—the once lively Lady Anne—was drooping daily! Alas, in what a situation were husband and wife! I could not help likening them to a noble tree, wreathed with the graceful, the affectionate ivy, and blasted by lightning—rending the one asunder, and withering the other. For so in truth it seemed. Lady Anne was evidently sinking under her sorrows. All the attentions of an idolising family, backed by the fond sympathies of "troops of friends"—even the consolations of religion—seemed alike unavailing!

The reader has not yet, however, been put into distinct possession of the cause of all this devastation.

It seems that shortly after his marriage, his solicitor suddenly travelled to the Continent after him, to communicate the startling, but, in the baronet's estimation, ridiculous intelligence, that a stranger was laying claim to all he held in the world, of title and fortune. The lawyer at length returned to England, over-persuaded by the baronet, to treat the matter with contemptuous indifference; and nothing further was in fact heard for some months, till, soon after Sir Henry's return, he received one evening, at his club—a circumstance which, I have before said, appeared to confirm certain speculations then afloat — a long letter, purporting to come from the solicitor of the individual preferring the fearful claim alluded to. It stated the affair at some length, and concluded by requesting certain information, which, said the writer, might possibly have the effect of convincing his client of his error, and conducing to the abandonment of his claim. This shocking communication at length roused the baronet from his lethargy. Several portions of it tallied strangely with particular passages in the family history of Sir Henry, who instantly hurried with consternation to his solicitor, by whom his worst apprehensions were aggravated. Not that the lawyer considered his case desperate, but he at once prepared his agitated client for long, harassing, and expensive litigation, and exposure of the most public nature. It cannot be wondered at that a sense of his danger should prey upon his feelings, and give him that disturbed manner which had occasioned the speculations, hints, and inuendoes, mentioned in an early part of this paper. He anxiously concealed from his lady the shocking jeopardy in which their all on earth was placed; and the constant effort and constraint —the withering anxiety — the long continued apprehensions of ruin—at length disordered, and finally overthrew his intellects. What was the precise nature of his adversary's pretensions, I am unable to state technically. I understand it consisted of an alleged earlier right under the entail. To support his claim, every quarter was ransacked for evidence by his zealous attorney, often in a manner highly indelicate and offensive. The upstart made his pretensions as public as possible; and a most imprudent overture made by Sir Henry's solicitor, was unscrupulously — triumphantly — seized upon by his adversary, and through his means at length found its way into the newspapers. The additional vexation this occasioned Sir Henry may be readily imagined; for, independently of his mortification at the circumstance, it was calculated most seriously to prejudice his interests; and when he kept ever before his agonised eyes the day of trial which was approaching, and the horrible catastrophe, he sunk under the mighty oppression. Lady Anne had, despite her husband's attempts at secresy, for some time entertained faint suspicions of the truth; but as he obstinately, and at length sternly, interdicted any inquiry on her part, and kept every document under lock and key, he contrived to keep her comparatively in the dark. He frequently, however, talked in his sleep, and often did she lie awake, listening to his mysterious

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expressions with sickening agitation. The illness of Sir Henry and his lady, together with its occasion, were now become generally known, and the cruel paragraph in the morning paper above copied, was only the precursor of many similar ones, which at length went to the extent of hinting, generally, the nature of the new claimant's pretensions, with the grounds of Sir Henry's resistance.

Recollecting the event of Lady Anne's last interview with Sir Henry, the reader may imagine the vexation and alarm with which, at the time she imagined I had fixed, I heard her insist upon the performance of my promise. Backed by the entreaties of her relatives, and my conviction of the danger that might attend such a step, I positively refused. It was in vain that she implored, frequently in an agony of tears, occasionally almost frantic at our opposition—we were all inexorable. During a month's interval, however, very greatly to my surprise and satisfaction, her health sensibly improved. We had contrived to some extent to occupy her attention with agreeable pursuits, and had from time to time soothed her with good accounts of Sir Henry. Her little son, too—a charming creature—was perpetually with her; and his prattle served to amuse her through many a long day. She was at length able to leave her bed, and spend several hours down stairs; and under such circumstances, she renewed her importunities with better success. I promised to see Sir Henry, and engaged to allow her an interview, if it could be brought about safely. In order to ascertain this point, I called one day upon the baronet, who still continued at Somerfield House, though several of his relatives had expressed a wish that he should be removed to private quarters. This, however, I opposed, jointly with Dr Y——, till the baronet had exhibited symptoms of permanent tranquillity. I found no alteration in the mode of his apparel. If his ridiculous appearance shocked me, what must be its effect on his unhappy lady? He wore —as he did every day—his tight-fitting green baize [what first put it into his head, I am at a loss to imagine], and happened to be in excellent humour; for he had just before beaten a crazy gentleman in the establishment, at chess. He was walking to and fro, rubbing his hands, detailing his triumph to his keeper with great glee, and received me with infinite cordiality. * * *

"What should you say to seeing company, Sir Henry?—Will you receive a visitor, if I bring one?"

"Oh, yes—happy to see them—that is, any day but to-morrow—any day but to-morrow," he replied briskly; "for to-morrow I shall be particularly engaged: the fact is, I am asked to dinner with the king, and am to play billiards with him."

"Ah! I congratulate you!—And, pray, does his majesty come to Somerfield, or do you go to Windsor?"

"Go to Windsor?—Lord bless you, his majesty lives *here*—this is his palace; and I have the honour to fill an important office in the household!—Were you not aware of that?"

"True—true; but at what hour do you wait on his majesty?"

"Three o'clock precisely—to the millionth part of a second."

"Hem!—Suppose, then, I take the opportunity of bringing my friend—who is very anxious to see you—at twelve o'clock?"

He paused, apparently considering. I was vexed that he made no inquiry as to the person I intended to introduce. I determined, however, that he should know.

"Well, Sir Henry, what say you—shall she come at twelve o'clock?"

"If she will *go* soon, I don't mind; but, you know, I must not be flurried, as I shall have so soon to attend the king. How can I play billiards if my hand trembles?—Oh, dear, it would never do—would it?"

"Certainly not; but what can there possibly be to flurry you in seeing Lady Anne?"

"Lady Anne!" he echoed, with a sheepish air—"well, you know, Lady Anne!—well—she can make allowances—eh?"

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Ay, indeed—poor madman—thought I, if such a spectacle as yourself does not paralyse her—replying, "Oh, yes—*all* allowances, supposing any to be necessary, you may depend upon it. She's very considerate, and longs to see you."

"Well, I hope you'll be in the room? for, do you know, the thought of it almost makes me sick—don't I look pale?" he inquired of his keeper—"It is so long since I have seen her. Will she—I hope—what I mean, is—has she recovered from the wound?"

"Ha, long ago! She was more frightened than hurt at the accident."

"*Accident!* is that what it is called? All the better for me, you know," he replied, with a serious air. "However, I consent to see her at the hour you mention. Tell her to be calm, and not try to frighten me, considering the king." With this he shook my hand, opened the door, and I took my leave. Dr Y—— greatly doubted the prudence of the step we were about to take; but we were too far committed with her ladyship to recede. I grew alarmed, on returning home, with the apprehension of her mere presence—however calmly she might behave—stirring up slumbering associations in the mind of her husband, that might lead to very unpleasant results. However, there was nothing for it but to await the experiment, and hope for the best.

The following morning, I called on her ladyship about eleven o'clock, and found her dressed and waiting. Outdoor costume seemed as if it did not become one so long an invalid. She looked flushed and feverish, but made great efforts to sustain the appearance of cheerfulness. She told me of her hearty breakfast—(a cup of tea and part of an egg!)—and spoke of her increasing strength. She could almost, she said, *walk* to Somerfield. Lady Julia trembled, Mrs Courthrope was deadly pale, and I felt deeply apprehensive of the effect of the coming excitement upon such shattered nerves as those of Lady Anne.

Into the roomy carriage we stepped, about half-past eleven. The day was bright and cold—the air, however, refreshing. As we approached Somerfield, it was evident that, but for the incessant use of her vinaigrette, Lady Anne must have fainted. We were all silent enough by the time we reached the gates of Dr Y——'s house. Lady Anne was assisted to alight, and, leaning on my arm and that of her sister, walked up with tottering steps to the house, where Mrs Y—— received her with all respectful attention. A glass of wine considerably reassured the fainting sufferer; and while she paused in the drawing-room to recover her breath, I stepped to the baronet's apartment to prepare him for a suitable reception of his lady. Dr Y—— informed me that Sir Henry had been talking about it ever since. I found him pacing slowly about his chamber, dressed, alas! with additional absurdity. In vain, I found, had both Dr Y—— and his keeper expostulated with him: they found that nothing else would keep him in humour. He wore, over his usual tight-fitting green baize dress, a flaming scarlet sash, with a massive gold chain round his neck. An ebony walking-stick was worn as a sword; and his cap, somewhat like that of a hussar, was surmounted with a peacock's feather, stripped, all but the eye at the top, and nearly three feet high. On this latter astounding appendage, I found he particularly prided himself. I implored him to remove it, but he begged me, somewhat haughtily, to allow him to dress as he pleased. I protest I felt sick at the spectacle. What a frightful object to present to Lady Anne! However, we might prepare her to expect something *outré* in her husband's appearance. "Permit me to ask, Sir Henry," said I, resolved upon a last effort, "why you are in full dress?"

He looked astonished at the question. "I thought, doctor, I told you of my engagement with his majesty!"

"Oh, ay, true; but perhaps you will receive your lady uncovered," said I, pressing for a dispensation with the abominable head-dress.

"No, sir," he replied, quietly but decisively, and I gave up the point. His keeper whispered to me at the door, that Sir Henry alleged as a reason

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for dressing himself as I have described, his having to attend the king immediately after the interview with his lady; so that he would have no time for dressing in the interval.

"Is the *party* ready?" inquired the baronet, interrupting our momentary *tête-à-tête*. I hesitated; I was suddenly inclined, at all hazards, to put off the dreaded interview; but I dared not venture on such a step.

"Y—yes, Sir Henry, and waits your pleasure to throw herself into your arms."

"What! good God! throw herself into my arms! throw herself into my arms! was there ever such a thing heard of?" exclaimed the baronet with a confounded air. "No, no! I can admit of no such familiarities! that is going *rather* too far—under the circumstances—eh?" turning towards his keeper, whom—most reluctant to assume it—he had thrust into a costume something like that of an Austrian soldier. "What do *you* say?" The man bowed in acquiescence.

"And further, doctor," continued the baronet, pointing to his keeper, "this gentleman, my secretary, must be present all the while to take notes of what passes."

"Undoubtedly," I replied, with an air of intense chagrin, inwardly cursing myself for permitting the useless and dangerous interview. I hastened back to the apartment in which I had left the ladies, and endeavoured to prepare Lady Anne, by describing, with a smile, her husband's dress. She strove to smile with me, and begged that she might be led into his presence at once. Leaning between Lady Julia and myself, she shortly tottered into the baronet's room, having first, at my suggestion, drawn down her black veil over her pale face.

"Pen! pen! pen!" hastily whispered the baronet to his keeper, as we opened the door—and the latter instantly took his seat at the table, before a desk, with pens and ink. The baronet bowed courteously to us as we entered.

"Speak to him," I whispered, as I led in her ladyship. She endeavoured to do so, but her tongue failed her. Her lips moved, and that was all. Lady Julia spoke for her sister, in tremulous accents. Lady Anne closed her eyes on seeing the fantastic dress of her husband, and shook like an aspen leaf.

"Harry, dearest Harry," at length she murmured, stretching her trembling arms towards him, as if inviting him to approach her. Sir Henry, with a polite, but distant air, took off his cap for a moment, and then carefully replaced it, without making any reply.

"Shall we take seats, Sir Henry?" I inquired.

"Yes—she may be seated," he replied, with an authoritative air, folding his arms, and leaning against the corner of the window, eyeing his lady with curious attention.

"Are you come here of your own free-will?" said he calmly.

"Yes, Henry, yes," she whispered.

"Put that down," said the baronet, in an under tone, to his secretary.

"Are you recovered?"

"Quite, dearest!" replied his lady faintly.

"Put *that* down," repeated the baronet quickly, looking at his "secretary" till he had written it. There was a pause. I sat beside Lady Anne, who trembled violently, and continued deadly pale.

"I am sure, Sir Henry," said I, "you are not displeased at her ladyship's coming to see you? If you are not, *do* come and tell her so, for she fears you are offended!" She grasped my fingers with convulsive efforts, without attempting to speak. Sir Henry, after an embarrassed pause, walked from where he had been standing, till he came directly before her, saying, in a low tone, looking earnestly into her countenance, "God be my witness, Anne, I bear you no malice; is it thus with you?" elevating his finger, and looking towards his keeper, intimating that he was to take down her reply—but none was made. He dropped slowly on one knee, drew the glove off his right hand, as if going to take hold of Lady Anne's, and tenderly said, "Anne, will you give me no reply?" There was no madness in either his tone or

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manner, and Lady Anne perceived the alteration.

"Harry! Harry! Dearest! — my love!" she murmured, suddenly stretching towards him her hands, and fell into his arms, where she lay for a while motionless.

"Poor creature! How acute her feelings are!" exclaimed the baronet calmly. "You should strive to master them, Anne, as I do. I bear you no ill-will; I know you had provocation! How her little heart beats!" he continued musingly. "Why, she has fainted! How very childish of her to yield so!"

It was true: the unhappy lady had fainted, and lay unconsciously in her more unconscious husband's arms. Her sister, weeping bitterly, rose to remove her; but the baronet's countenance became suddenly clouded. He allowed us to assist his lady, by removing her bonnet, but continued to grasp her firmly by the wrists, staring into her face with an expression of mingled concern and wonder. His keeper's practised eye evidently saw the storm rising, and came up to him.

"You had better let her ladyship be removed!" he whispered into his ear authoritatively, eyeing him fixedly, at the same time gently disengaging her arms from his grasp.

"Well—be it so; I'm sorry for her. I've a strange recollection of her kindness; and is it come to this, poor Anne!" he exclaimed tremulously, and walked to the further window, where he stood with his back towards us, evidently weeping. We removed Lady Anne immediately from the room; and it was so long before she recovered, that we doubted whether it would be safe to remove her home that day. "Well, as far as I am concerned," thought I, as I bent over her insensible form, "this is the last time I will be a party to the torture inflicted by such a scene as this, though in obedience to your own wishes!" As I was passing from the room in which she lay, I encountered Sir Henry, followed closely by his keeper.

"Whither now, Sir Henry?" I inquired with a sigh.

"Going to tell the king that I cannot dine with him to-day, as I had promised, for I am quite agitated, though I scarce know why. Who brought Lady Anne to me?" he whispered. I made him no reply. "I am glad I have met you, however; we'll take a turn in the grounds, for I have something of the highest consequence to tell you."

"Really you must excuse me, Sir Henry; I have"——

"Are you in earnest, doctor? Do you know the consequences of refusing to attend to my wishes?"

I suffered him to place my arm in his, and he led me down the steps into the garden. Round, and round, and round we walked, at a rapid rate, his face turned towards me all the while with an expression of intense anxiety —but not a syllable did he utter. Faster and faster we walked, till our pace became almost a run, and, beginning to feel both fatigued and dizzy, I gently swayed him from the pathway towards the door-steps.

"Poor—poor Anne!" he exclaimed in a mournful tone, and starting from me abruptly, hurried to a sort of alcove close at hand, and sat down, covering his face with his handkerchief, his elbows resting upon his knees. I watched him for a moment from behind the door, and saw that he was weeping, and that bitterly. Poor Sir Henry! Presently one of his brother captives approached him, running from another part of the grounds, in a merry mood, and slapping him instantly on the back, shouted, "I am the Lord of the Isles!"

"I can't play billiards with your majesty to-day," replied Sir Henry, looking up, his eyes red and swollen with weeping.

"Embrace me, then!" said the lunatic; and they were forthwith locked in one another's arms. "You are in tears!" exclaimed the stranger, himself beginning suddenly to cry; but in a moment or two he started off, putting his hand to his mouth, and bellowing, "Yoicks—yoicks! Stole away! Stole away!"

The baronet relapsed into his for-

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mer mood, and continued in a similar posture for several minutes, when he rose up, wiped away his tears, and commenced walking again round the green, his arms folded on his breast as before, and talking to himself with great vehemence. I could catch only a few words here and there, as he hurried past me. "It will never be believed!—What could have been my inducement?—When will it be tried?—saw all the while through his disguise!—My secretary—if acquitted—released—discovery—ennobled"—were fragments of his incoherences. Alas! what an object he looked! I could not help thinking of the contrast he now afforded to the animated figure he had presented to the eye of the beholder from the gallery of the House of Commons—the busy eager throngs of the clubs—and as the man of fashion and literature!

Hei mihi, qualis erat! quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore, qui redit exuvias indutus Achillis,
Vel Danaum Phrygios jaculatus puppibus ignes!

On regaining her room, I found Lady Anne had been relieved by a copious flood of tears. She continued weeping hysterically, and uttering wild incoherences for some time, nor could the entreaties or commiserations of those around her assuage her grief. When at length her paroxysm had abated from exhaustion, she expressed a determination not to be removed from the house in which her unfortunate husband resided! It was in vain that we represented the peril with which such a resolution was attended, as well to herself as Sir Henry; she was deaf to our solicitations, regardless of our warnings. She requested Mrs Y—— to inform her whether their house was fully occupied; and on receiving a hesitating answer in the negative, at once engaged apartments occupying the whole of the left wing of the building, careless, she said, at what expense. The result was, that, finding her inflexible on this point, the requisite arrangements were at once entered upon, and that very night she, with her sister and maid, slept under the same roof with her unconscious—her afflicted husband. Every measure was taken to secure her from danger, and keep her as much out of Sir Henry's way as possible.

Nearly a month passed away without her having been once in Sir Henry's company, or even seeing him, for more than a moment or two together; and, unlikely as it had seemed, her health and spirits appeared rather to improve than otherwise. At length the baronet, being taken in a happy mood, was informed that she had long been a resident in Somerfield House, at which he expressed no surprise, and consented to her being invited to take tea in his apartment. He was very shy and silent during the interview, and seemed under constraint till his guests had taken leave of him. Gradually, however, he grew reconciled to their visits, which he occasionally returned—always accompanied by his "secretary"—and took great pleasure in hearing the sisters play on the piano. He composed verses, which they pretended to set to music; he brought them flowers, and received various little presents in return. For hours together he would sit with them reading, and hearing read, novels and newspapers—and, in short, grew in a manner humanised again. He treated Lady Anne with great civility, but towards her sister Julia he behaved as if he were courting her! They soon prevailed upon him to discard the absurd peacock's feather he frequently wore, always on Sundays—accepting, in its stead, a small drooping ostrich feather, which also, in its turn, he was by and by induced to lay aside altogether, as well as to assume more befitting clothing. They could not, however, dislodge from his crazed imagination the idea that he was confined in prison, awaiting his trial for the murder of his wife, and high treason.

How can I do justice to the virtues of his incomparable wife, or sufficiently extol her unwearying, her ennobling self-devotion to the welfare of her afflicted husband! Her only joy was to minister to his comfort, at whatever cost of feeling, or even health, at all

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hours, in all seasons; to bear with his infinite, incongruous whims, perversities, and provocations; to affect delight when *he* was delighted; to soothe and comfort him under all his imaginary grievances. Her whole thoughts, when absent from him, were absorbed in devising schemes for his amusement and occupation. She would listen to no entreaties for cessation from her anxious labours; no persuasions, no inducements, could withdraw her even for a moment from the dreary scene of her husband's humiliation and degradation. Hail, woman, exalted amongst thy sex! Eulogy would but tarnish and obscure the honour that is thy due!

All, however, was unavailing; the unhappy sufferer exhibited no symptom of mental convalescence; on the other hand, his delusions became more numerous and obstinate than ever. He seemed to be totally unconscious of Lady Anne's being his *wife;* he treated her, and spoke of her, as an amiable companion, and even made her his confidant. Amongst other vagaries, he communicated to her a long story about his attachment to a girl he had seen about the premises, and earnestly asked her opinion in what way he could most successfully make her an offer!

He addressed her, one morning, as Queen, receiving her with the most obsequious obeisances. He persisted in this hallucination with singular pertinacity. All poor Lady Anne's little familiarities and endearments were thenceforth at an end; for he seemed so abashed by her presence, that no efforts of condescension sufficed to reassure him, and she was compelled to support a demeanour consistent with the station which his crazed imagination assigned her. His great delight was to be sent on her royal errands about the house and grounds! He could hardly ever be prevailed upon to sit, at least at ease, in her presence; and was with difficulty induced to eat at the same table. The agony I have seen in her eye on these occasions! Compelled to humour his delusions, she wore splendid dresses and jewels; and dismissed him on every occasion by coldly extending her hand, which he would kiss with an air of reverent loyalty!

He believed himself to have been elevated to the rank of a general officer, and insisted on being provided with a military band, to play before his windows every evening after dinner. He invited me, one day, in the Queen's name, to dinner in his apartments, some time after this delusion had manifested itself. It was a soft September evening, and the country round about was everywhere bronzed with the touch of autumn. During dinner, Sir Henry treated his lady with all the profound respect and ceremony due to royalty, and I, of course, was obliged to assume a similar deportment; while she, poor soul! was compelled to receive with condescending urbanity attentions, every one of which smote her heart as an additional evidence of the inveteracy of her husband's malady. I observed her narrowly. There was no tear in her eye—no flurry of manner—no sighing: hers was the deep silent anguish of a breaking heart!

Shortly after dinner had been removed, we drew our chairs—Lady Anne in the centre, seated on a sort of throne, specially provided for her by the baronet—in a circle round the ample bow-window that overlooked the most sequestered part of the grounds connected with the establishment, as well as a sweep of fine scenery in the distance. In a bower, a little to our right, was placed Sir Henry's band, who were playing very affectingly various pieces of brilliant military music. By my direction, privately given beforehand, they suddenly glided, from a bold march, into a concert on French horns. Oh, how exquisite was that soft melancholy wailing melody! The hour—the deepening gloom of evening—the circumstances—the persons—were all in mournful keeping with the music, to which we were listening in subdued silence. Lady Anne's tears stole fast down her cheeks, while her eyes were fixed with sad earnestness upon her husband, who sat in a

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low chair, a little on her left hand, his chin resting on the palm of his hand, gazing with a melancholy air on the darkening scenery without. Occasionally I heard Lady Anne struggling to subdue a sob, but unsuccessfully. Another, and another, and another forced its way—and I trembled lest her excitement should assume a more violent form. I saw her, almost unconsciously, lay her hand upon that of the baronet, and clasp it with convulsive energy. So she held it for some moments, when the madman slowly turned round, looking her full in the face; his countenance underwent a ghastly change, and, fixing on her an eye of demoniac expression, he slowly rose in his seat, seeming, to my disturbed fancy, an evil spirit called up by the witchery of music, and sprung out of the room. Lady Anne, with a faint groan, fell at full length upon the floor; her sister, shrieking wildly, strove to raise her in vain; I hurried after the madman, but, finding his keeper was at his heels, returned. I never can forget that dreadful evening! Sir Henry rushed out of the house, sprung at one bound over a high fence, and sped across a field, amidst the almost impervious gloom of evening, with steps such as those of the monster of Frankenstein. His keeper, with all his efforts, could not gain upon him, and sometimes altogether lost sight of him. He followed him for nearly two miles, and at length found that he was overtaking the fugitive. When he had come up within a yard of him, the madman turned round unexpectedly, struck his pursuer a blow that brought him to the ground, and immediately scrambled up into a great elm-tree that stood near, from amidst whose dark foliage he was presently heard howling in a terrific manner; anon, there was a crashing sound amongst the branches, as of a heavy body falling through them, and Sir Henry lay stunned and bleeding upon the ground. Fortunately the prostrate keeper had called out loudly for assistance as he ran along; and his voice attracted one or two of the men whom I had despatched after him, and between the three Sir Henry was brought home again, to all appearance dead. An eminent surgeon in the neighbourhood was summoned in to his assistance, for I could not quit the chamber of Lady Anne—she was totally insensible, having fallen into a succession of swoons since the moment of Sir Henry's departure; Lady Julia was in an adjoining room, shrieking in violent hysterics; and, in short, it seemed not impossible that she might lose her reason, and Sir Henry and Lady Anne their lives. 'Tis a small matter to mention at such a crisis as this, but I recollect it forcibly arrested my attention at the time—the band of musicians, unaware of the catastrophe that had occurred, according to their orders, continued playing the music that had been attended with such disastrous consequences; and as Lady Anne's bed-chamber happened to be in that part of the building nearest to the spot where the band were stationed, we continued to hear the sad wailing of the bugles and horns without, till it occurred to Mrs Y—— to send and silence them. This little incidental circumstance—the sudden mysterious seizure of Sir Henry, the shrieks of Lady Julia—the swoons of Lady Anne—all combined, completely bewildered me. It seemed to be a dream.

I cannot—I need not—dwell upon the immediate consequences of that sad night. Suffice it to say, Sir Henry was found to have received severe but not fatal injury, which, however, was skilfully and successfully treated; but he lay in a state of comparative stupor for near a week, at which period his mental malady resumed its wildest form, and rendered necessary the severest treatment. As for Lady Anne, her state became eminently alarming; and as soon as some of the more dangerous symptoms had subsided, we determined on removing her, at all hazards, from her present proximity to Sir Henry, to —— Hall, trusting to the good effects of a total change of scene and of faces. She had not strength enough to oppose our measures, but suffered herself to be conducted from Somerfield without an

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effort at complaint. I trembled to see an occasional vacancy in the expression of her eye; was it *impossible* that her husband's malady might prove at length contagious? Many weeks passed over her, before Lady Anne exhibited the slightest signs of amendment. Her shocks had been too numerous and severe—her anxieties and agonies too long continued—to warrant reasonable hopes of her ultimate recovery. At length, however, the lapse of friendly time, potent in assuaging the sorrows of mankind, the incessant and most affectionate attentions of her numerous relatives, were rewarded by seeing an improvement, slight though it was. The presence of her little boy powerfully engaged her attention. She would have him lying beside her on the bed for hours together; she spoke little to him, sleeping or waking, but her eye was ever fixed upon his little features; and when she was asleep, her fingers would unconsciously wreathe themselves amongst his flaxen curls. About Sir Henry she made little or no inquiry; and when she did, we of course put the best face possible upon matters. Her frequent efforts to see and converse with him had proved woefully and uniformly unsuccessful; and she seemed henceforth to give up the idea of all interference with despair.

But the original, the direful occasion of all this domestic calamity, must not be overlooked. The contest respecting the title and estates of Sir Henry went on as rapidly as the nature of the case would permit. The new claimant was, as I think I hinted before, a man of low station; he had been, I believe, a sort of slave-driver, or factotum on a planter's estate in one of the West India islands; and it was whispered that a rich Jew had been persuaded into such confidence in the man's prospects, as to advance him, from time to time, on his personal security, the considerable supplies necessary to prosecute his claims with effect.

There were very many matters of most essential consequence that no one could throw light upon but the unfortunate baronet himself; and his solicitor had consequently, in the hope of Sir Henry's recovery, succeeded in interposing innumerable obstacles, with the view, as well of wearing out his opponents, as affording every chance for the restoration of his client's sanity. It was, I found, generally understood in the family, that the solicitor's expectations of success in the lawsuit were far from sanguine: not that he believed the new claimant to be the *bonâ fide* heir to the title, but he was in the hands of those who would ransack the world for evidence—and, when it was wanting, *make* it. Every imaginable source of delay, however—salvation to the one party, destruction to the other—was at length closed up; all preliminaries were arranged; the case was completed on both sides, and set down for trial. Considerable expectation was excited in the public mind; occasional paragraphs hinted the probability of such and such disclosures; and it was even rumoured that considerable bets were depending upon the issue.

I was in the habit of visiting Sir Henry once or twice a-week. He became again calm as before the occasion of his last dreadful outbreak; and his bodily health was complete. New delusions took possession of him. He was at one time composing a history of the whole world; at another, writing a memoir of every member that had ever sat in the House of Commons, together with several other magnificent undertakings. All, however, at length gave way to "The Pedigree, a Tale of Real Life," which consisted of a rambling, exaggerated account of his own lawsuit. It was occasioned by his happening, unfortunately, to cast his eye upon the following little paragraph in his newspaper, which chanced to have been most stupidly overlooked by the person who had been engaged for no other purpose than to read over the paper beforehand, and prevent any such allusions from meeting the eye of the sufferer:—

"*Sir Henry Harleigh, Bart.*—This unfortunate gentleman continues still greatly indisposed. We understand

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that little hope is entertained of his ultimate recovery. The result, therefore, of the approaching trial of 'Doe on the demise of Higgs *v.* Harleigh,' will signify but little to the person principally interested."

From the moment of his reading these lines, he fell into a state of profound melancholy—which was, however, somewhat relieved by the task with which he had occupied himself, of recording his own misfortunes. He had resumed his former dress of green baize, as well as the intolerable peacock's feather. What could have conferred such a permanency upon, or suggested this preposterous *penchant*, I know not—except the interest he had formerly taken in a corps of riflemen, who were stationed near a house he had occupied in the country. He continued quiet and inoffensive. His keeper's office was little else than a sinecure—till Sir Henry suddenly set him about making two copies of every page he himself composed!

I remember calling upon him one morning about this time, and finding him pacing about his chamber in a very melancholy mood. He welcomed me with more than his usual cordiality; and dismissing his attendant, said, "Doctor, did you ever hear me speak in Parliament?" I told him I had not.

"Then you shall hear me now; and tell me candidly what sort of an advocate you think I should have made—for I have serious thoughts of turning my attention to the bar. I'll suppose myself addressing the jury on my own case—and you must represent the jury. Now!"—

He drew a chair and table towards a corner of the room—mounted on it, having thrown a cloak over his shoulders, and commenced. Shall I be believed when I declare that—as far as my judgment goes—I listened on that occasion, for nearly an hour, to an *orator?* He spoke, of course, in the third person; and stated in a simple and most feeling manner, his birth, education, fortune, family, marriage—his Parliamentary career—in short, his happiness, prosperity, and pride. Then he represented the contemptuous indifference with which he treated the first communications concerning the attack meditated upon his title and property, as well as the consternation with which he subsequently discovered the formidable character of the claim set up against him. He begged me—the jury—to put myself in his place; to fancy his feelings; and proceeded to draw a masterly sketch of the facts of the case. He drew a lively picture of the secret misery he had endured—his agony lest his wife should hear of the disastrous intelligence—his sleepless nights and harassing days—the horrid apprehension of his adversary's triumph—the prospect of his own degradation—his wife—his child's beggary—till I protest he brought tears into my eyes. But, alas! at this point of his history, he mentioned his prodigious discovery of the mode of turning tallow into wax, and dashed off into an extravagant enumeration of the advantages of the speculation! Then, before me, stood confessed—THE MADMAN—violent and frantic in his gestures, haranguing me, in my own person, on the immense and incalculable wealth that would reward the projector; and, had I not risen to go, he would probably have continued in the same strain for the remainder of the day! I had purposed calling that evening on Lady Anne—but I gave up the idea. The image of her insane husband would be too fresh in my mind. I felt I could not bear to *see* her, and *think* of him. What a lot was mine—thus alternating visits between the diseased in mind, and the diseased in body—and that between husband and wife—over whom was besides impending the chance, if not probability, of total ruin! Oh, Providence—mysterious and awful in thy dispensations among the children of men!—who shall inquire into thy purposes, who question their wisdom or beneficence!

Who sees not Providence supremely wise—
Alike in what it gives, and what denies!
—POPE.

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My heart misgives me, however, that the reader will complain of being detained so long amongst these scenes of monotonous misery—I would I had those of a different character to present to him! Let me therefore draw my long narrative to a close, by transcribing a few extracts from the later entries in my journal.

*Saturday, November* 5, 18—.—This was the day appointed for the trial of the important cause which was to decide the proprietorship of the title and possessions of Sir Henry Harleigh. Much interest was excited, and the court crowded at an early hour. Four of the most distinguished counsel at the bar had taken their seats, each with his ponderous load of papers and books before him, in the interest of Sir Henry, and three in that of his opponent. A special jury was sworn; the judge took his seat; the cause was called on; the witnesses were summoned. The plaintiff's junior counsel rose to open the pleadings — after having paused for some time for the arrival of his client's attorney, who, while he was speaking, at length made his appearance, excessively pale and agitated, and hurriedly whispered to his leading counsel. The plaintiff had been found dead in his bed that morning—having been carried thither in a state of brutal intoxication the preceding night, from a tavern-dinner with his attorney and witnesses. He died single, and there of course was an end of the whole matter that had been attended with such direful consequences to Sir Henry and his lady. But of what avail is the now established security of his title, rank, and fortune to their unhappy owner? — an outcast from society—from home—from family—from the wife of his bosom — even from himself! What signifies the splendid intelligence to Lady Anne — perishing under the pressure of her misfortunes? Will it not a thousand-fold aggravate the agonies she is enduring?

It has been thought proper to intrust to *me* the difficult task of communicating the news to both parties, if I think it advisable that it should be done at all. What am I to do?—What may be the consequence of the secret's slipping out suddenly from any of those around Lady Anne? About the baronet I had little apprehension; I felt satisfied that he could not comprehend it—that whether he had lost or won the suit was a matter of equal moment to *him!*

As I had a patient to visit this morning, whose residence was near Somerfield, I determined to take that opportunity of trying the effect of the intelligence on Sir Henry. It was about two o'clock when I called, and found him sitting by the fire, reading one of Shakespeare's plays. I gradually led his thoughts into a suitable train, and then told him, briefly, and pointedly, and accurately, his own history, up to the latest incident of all—but as of a *third* person, and that a nobleman. He listened to the whole with profound interest.

"God bless me!" he exclaimed, with a thoughtful air, as I concluded —"I surely *must* have either heard or read of this story before!—You don't mean to say that it is *fact?*—That it has happened lately?"

"Indeed I do, Sir Henry," I replied, looking at him earnestly.

"And are the parties living?—Lord and Lady ——?"

"Both of them—at this moment—and not ten miles from where we are now sitting!"

"Indeed!" he replied, musingly—"that's unfortunate!"

"*Unfortunate*, Sir Henry!" I echoed with astonishment.

"Very—for *my* purpose. What do you suppose I have been thinking of all this while?" he replied with a smile. "What a subject it would be for a tragedy!—But, of course, since the parties are living, it would never do!—Still, I cannot help thinking that *something* might be made of it! One might disguise and alter the facts."

"It is a tragedy of *very* real life!" I exclaimed with a deep sigh.

"Indeed it is!" he replied, echoing my sigh—"it shows that fact often transcends all fiction—does it not? Now, if this had been the plot of a tale

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or novel, people would have said—'how improbable! how unnatural!'"

"Ay, indeed they would, Sir Henry," said I, unable to keep the tears from my eyes.

"'*Tis* affecting," he replied, his eyes glistening with emotion, adding after a moment's pause, in a somewhat tremulous tone—"Now, which of the two do you most pity, doctor, Lord or Lady Mary ——?"

"Both. I scarce know which most."

"How did they bear the news, by the way, do you know?" he inquired with sudden interest.

"I believe Lady Mary —— is in too dangerous circumstances to be told of it. They say she is dying!"

"Poor creature! what a melancholy fate! And she is young and beautiful, you say?"

"She is young, but not now beautiful, Sir Henry!"

"I wish it had not been all *real!*" he replied, looking thoughtfully at the fire. "What would Shakespeare have made of it! It would have been a treasure to the writer of King Lear! And how, pray, did Lord —— receive the intelligence?—Stop," said he suddenly—"stop—How can one imagine *Shakespeare* to have drawn the scene? How would *he* have made Lord —— behave? Let me see, an ordinary writer could make the madman roar, and stamp, and rave, and perhaps be at length sobered with the news—would not he?"

"Very probably, Sir Henry," I replied faintly.

"Ah, very different, I imagine, would be the delineation of that master painter! Possibly he would make the poor madman listen to it all, as to a tale of another person! He would represent him as charmed with the truth and nature of the invention—poor, poor wretch!—commiserating himself in another!—How profound the delusion!—How consummately true to nature!—How simple, but how wonderfully fine, would be the scene under SHAKESPEARE's pencil!" continued Sir Henry with a sigh, folding his arms on his breast, leaning back in his chair, and looking thoughtfully into the fire.

"Why, you are equal to Shakespeare yourself, then, my dear Sir Henry."

"What!—what do you mean?" said he, starting and turning suddenly towards me with some excitement, rather pleasureable, however, than otherwise—"Have I, then"——

"You have described it EXACTLY as it happened!"

"No! Do you really say so? How do you know it, my dear doctor?" said he, scarce able to sit in his chair, his countenance brightening with delight.

"Because I was present, Sir Henry; I communicated the intelligence," I replied, while everything in the room seemed swimming round me.

"Good God, doctor! Are you really in earnest?"

"As I live and breathe in the sight of God, Sir Henry," I replied, as solemnly as my thick hurried voice would let me, fixing my eye keenly upon his. He gave a horrible start, and remained staring at me with an expression I cannot describe.

"Why—did you see that flash of lightning, doctor?" he presently stammered, shaking from head to foot.

"Lightning, Sir Henry! lightning!" I faltered, on the verge of shouting for his keeper.

"Oh—poh!" he exclaimed with a long gasp, "I—I beg your pardon! How nervous you have made me! Ha, ha, ha!" attempting a laugh that mocked him with its faintness; "but really you *do* tell me such horrid tales, and look so dreadfully expressive while you are telling them, that—that—upon my soul—I cannot bear it! Poh! how hot the room is! Let us throw open the window and let in fresh air!" He rose, and I with him. Thank God, he could not succeed, and I began to breathe freely again. He walked about fanning himself with his pocket-handkerchief. He attempted to smile at me, but it was in vain; he became paler and paler, his limbs seemed to stagger under him, and I had scarce time to drop him into a chair, before he fainted. I summoned his keeper to my assistance, and, with the ordinary means, we soon restored Sir Henry to consciousness.

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"Ah! is that you?" he exclaimed, faintly smiling, as his eye fell upon the keeper. "I thought we had parted long ago! Why, where have you, or rather where have I been?"

At length, with the aid of a little wine and water, he recovered his self-possession.

"Heigh-ho! I shall be fit for nothing all the day, I am afraid! So I shall go and play at chess with the king. Is his majesty at liberty?"

My soul sunk within me; and seeing he was uneasy at my stay, I took my leave; but it was several hours before I quite recovered from the effects of perhaps the most agitating scene I ever encountered. I found it impossible to pay my promised visit to Lady Anne that evening. One such interview as the above is enough, not for a day, but a life; so I despatched a servant on horseback with a note, stating that I should call, if possible, the next evening.

*Sunday, Nov.* 6.—I determined to call upon Sir Henry to-day, to see the effect, if any, produced by our yesterday's conversation. He had just returned from hearing Dr Y—— read prayers, and was perfectly calm. There was no alteration in his manner; and one of the earliest observations he made was, "Ah, doctor, how you deceived me yesterday! What could I be thinking of, not to know that you were repeating, in another shape, the leading incident in—absolutely!—ha, ha!—my own tale of 'The Pedigree!' 'Tis quite inconceivable how I could have forgotten it as you went on; but I have gained some valuable hints! I shall now get on with it rapidly, and have it at press as soon as possible. I hope it will be thought worthy by the world of the compliments you took occasion to pay me so delicately yesterday!"

I took my leave of him, in despair.

On reaching —— Hall, in the evening, I found that the news, with the delivery of which I fancied myself specially and exclusively charged, had by some means or other found its way to her ladyship at an early hour in the afternoon of the preceding day. She had been but slightly agitated on hearing it; and the first words she murmured, were a prayer that the Almighty would make the intelligence the means of her husband's restoration to reason; but for herself she expressed perfect resignation to the Divine will, and hope that the consolations of religion might not be withdrawn from her during the little interval that lay between her and hereafter. Surely that pure prayer, proceeding from the depths of a broken heart, through guileless lips, found favour with her merciful Maker. Surely it was *His* influence that diffused thenceforth serenity and peace through the chamber of the dying sufferer; that extracted the keen thorn of mental agony; that healed the broken spirit, while it gently dissolved the elements of life—kindling, amid the decaying fabric of an earthly tabernacle, that light of faith and hope which shines

"Most vigorous when the body dies!"

Come hither for a moment, ye that doubt, or deny the existence of such an influence; approach with awful steps this deathbed chamber of youth, beauty, rank—of all loveliness in womanhood, and dignity in station—hither! and say, do you call THIS "the deathbed of hope—the young spirit's grave?" Who is it that hath rolled back from this sacred chamber-door the boisterous surges of this world's disquietude, and, "bidden them that they come not near?"

It was true that Lady Anne was dying, and dying under bitter circumstances, as far as mere earthly considerations were concerned; but was it hard to die, surrounded by such an atmosphere of "peace that passeth understanding?"

I found my sweet patient surrounded by her sisters, and one or two other ladies, and propped up with pillows in a sort of couch, drawn before the fire, whose strong light fell full upon her face, and showed me what havoc grief had made of her once beautiful features. She was then scarcely eight-and-twenty; and yet you might have guessed her nearly forty! The light

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with which her full eyes once sparkled had passed away, and left them sunk deep in the sockets, laden with the gloom of death. Her cheeks were hollow, and the deep bordering of her cap added to their wasted and shrunken appearance. One of her sisters, a very lovely woman, was sitting close beside her, and had always been considered her image; alas, what a woeful disparity was now visible!

Lady Sarah, my patient's youngest sister, was stooping down upon the floor, when I entered, in search of her sister's wedding-ring, which had fallen from a finger no longer capable of filling it. "You had better wind a little silk about it," whispered Lady Anne, as her sister was replacing it on the attenuated, alabaster-hued finger from which it had dropped. "I do not wish it ever to be removed again. Do it love!" Her sister, in tears, nodded acquiescence, and left the room with the ring, while I seated myself in the chair she had quitted by her sister's side. I had time to ask only a few of the ordinary questions, when Lady Sarah reappeared at the door, very pale, and beckoned out one of her sisters to communicate the melancholy intelligence, that moment received, that their father, the old Earl, who had travelled up from Ireland, though in an infirm state of health, to see his dying daughter, at her earnest request—had expired upon the road! In a few minutes, all present had, one by one, left the room in obedience to similar signals at the door, and I was left alone with Lady Anne.

"Doctor," said she calmly, "I am afraid something alarming has happened. See how they have hurried from the room! I observed Sarah, through that glass," said she, pointing me to a dressing-glass that stood so as to reflect whatever took place at the door. "Are *you* aware of anything that has happened?" I solemnly assured her to the contrary. She sighed—but evinced not the slightest agitation.

"I hope they will tell me all; whatever it is, I thank God I believe I can bear it! But, doctor," she pursued in the same calm tone, "whatever that may be, let me take this opportunity of asking you a question or two about—Sir Henry. When did you see him?" I told her.

"Have you much hope of his case?"—I hesitated.

"Pray, doctor, be frank with a dying woman!" said she with solemnity. "Heaven will vouchsafe me strength to bear whatever you may have to tell me!—How is it?"

"I—I fear—that at present—at least, he is no *worse*, and certainly far more tranquil than formerly."

"Does he know of the event of Saturday? How did it affect him?"

"But little, my lady. He did not seem quite to comprehend it." She shook her head slowly, and sighed.

"I hope your ladyship has received consolation from the intelligence?"

"Alas, what should it avail *me!* But there is my *child*. Thank God, he will not now be—a beggar! Heaven watch over his orphan years!" I thought a tear trembled in her eye, but it soon disappeared. "Doctor," she added in a fainter tone even than before, for she was evidently greatly exhausted, "one word more! I am afraid my weakness has from time to time occasioned you much trouble—in the frequent attempts I have made to see my husband—my poor lost Henry!"—She paused for several seconds. "But the word is spoken from on high; I shall never see him again on this side the grave! I have written a letter to him, which I wish to be delivered to him after I shall be no more, provided—he be capable of—of"—again she paused. "It is lying in my portfeuille below, and is sealed with black. It contains a lock of my hair, and I have written a few lines—but nothing that can pain him. Will you take the charge of it?" I bowed in respectful acquiescence. She extended her wasted fingers towards me, in token of her satisfaction. I can give the reader, I feel, no adequate idea of the solemn, leisurely utterance with which all the above heart-breaking words were spoken. In her manner there was the profound composure of consciously

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approaching dissolution. She seemed beyond the reach of her former agitation of feeling—shielded, as it were, with a merciful apathy. I sat beside her, in silence, for about a quarter of an hour. Her eyes were closed, and I thought she was dozing. Presently one of her sisters, her eyes swollen with weeping, stepped softly into the room, and sat down beside her.

"Who is dead, love?" inquired Lady Anne, without opening her eyes. Her sister made no reply, and there was a pause. "He would have been here before this, but for"—muttered Lady Anne, breaking off abruptly. Still her sister made no reply. "Yes—I feel it; my father is dead!" exclaimed Lady Anne, adding in a low tone, "if I had but strength to tell you of my dream last night! Call them all in—call them all in; and I will try, while I have strength," she continued, with more energy and distinctness than I had heard during the evening. Her eye opened suddenly, and settled upon her sister.

"Do not delay—call them all in to hear my dream!" Her sister, with a surprised and alarmed air, hastened to do her bidding.

"They imagine I do not see my father!" exclaimed Lady Anne, her eye glancing at me with sudden brightness. "There he is—he wishes to see his children around him, poor old man!" A faint and somewhat wild smile lit her pallid features for a moment. "I hear them on the stairs—they must not find me thus. I am getting cold!" She suddenly rose from the couch on which she had been reclining, drew her dress about her, and to my great astonishment walked to the bed. Her maid that moment entered, and assisted in drawing the clothes over her. I followed, and begged her to be calm. Her pulse fluttered fast under my finger.

"I should not have hastened so much," said she feebly, "but he is beckoning to me!" At this moment her sisters entered the room. "The lights are going out, and yet I see him!" she whispered almost inarticulately. "Julia—Sarah—Elizabeth—Elizabeth—Eliza—El"—she murmured; her cold hand suddenly closed upon my fingers, and I saw that the brief struggle was over!

Her poor sisters, thus in one day doubly bereaved, were heart-broken. What a house of mourning was —— Hall! I felt that my presence was oppressive. What could *I* do to alleviate grief so profound—to stanch wounds so recent! I therefore took my leave shortly after the decease of Lady Anne. As I was walking down the grand stair-case, I was overtaken by the nursery-maid, carrying down the little orphan son of her ladyship.

"Well, my poor little boy," said I, stopping her, and patting the child on the cheek, "what brings *you* about so late as this?"

"'Deed, sir," replied the woman sobbing, "I don't know what has come to Master Harry to-night! He was well enough all day; but ever since seven o'clock, he's been so restless that we didn't know what to do with him. He's now dozing and then waking; and his little moans are very sad to hear. Hadn't he better have some quieting physic, sir?"

The child looked, indeed, all she said. He turned from the light, and his little face was flushed and feverish.

"Has he asked after his mamma?"

"Yes, sir, often—poor dear thing! He wants to go to her; he says he will sleep with her to-night, or he won't go to bed at all," said the girl sobbing; "and we daren't tell him that—that—he's no mamma to go to any more!"

I thought of the FATHER—then of the son—then of the precious link between them that lay severed and broken in the chamber above: and with moist eyes and a quivering lip, kissed the child and left the Hall. It was a wretched November night. The scene without harmonised with the gloom within. The country all around was wrapped in a dreary winding-sheet of snow; the sleet came down without ceasing; and the wind moaned as it were a dirge for the dead! Alas for the dead! Alas for the early dead! The untimely dead!

Alas, alas, for the *living!*

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*Tuesday, Nov. 8th.*—"On Sunday, the 6th November, at ——Hall, of rapid decline, Lady Anne, wife of Sir Henry Harleigh, Bart., and third daughter of the late Right Hon. the Earl of ——, whom she survived only one day."

Such was the record of my sweet patient's death that appeared in to-day's papers. Alas, of what a sum of woes are these brief entries often the exponents! How little does the eye that hastily scans them, see of the vast accumulations of suffering which are there too frequently represented!

This entry was full before my eyes when I called to-day upon Sir Henry, who was busily engaged at billiards in the public room with Dr Y——. He played admirably, but was closely matched by the doctor, and so eager in the game, that he had hardly time to ask me how I was. I stood by till he had proved the winner, and great was his exultation.

"I'll play you for a hundred pounds, doctor!" said Sir Henry; "and give you a dozen!"

"Have you nothing to say to your friend, Dr ——?" replied Dr Y——, who knew that I had called for the purpose of attempting to make Sir Henry sensible of the death of Lady Anne.

"Oh, yes! I'll play with *him;* but before I lay odds, we must try our skill against one another. Come, doctor," extending the cue; "you shall begin!"

Of course I excused myself, and succeeded in enticing him to his own apartment, by mentioning his tale of the "Pedigree."

"Ah, true," said he briskly; "I'm glad you've thought of it! I wish to talk a little to you on the subject."

We were soon seated together before the fire, he with the manuscripts lying on his knee, and telling me the progress he had made since we had met.

"And what have you done with the *wife?*" said I pointedly.

"Oh, Lady Mary? Why—let me see. By the way—in *your* version of *my* story, the other day—how did *you* dispose of her?" he inquired curiously, and with a smile!

I heaved a deep sigh. "God Almighty has disposed of her since then," said I, looking him full in the face. "He has taken her gentle spirit to himself; she has left a dreary world, Sir Henry!" He looked at me with a puzzled air.

"I can't for the life of me make you out, doctor! What do you mean? What are you talking of? Whom are you confounding with *my* heroine? Some patient you have just left? Your wits are wool-gathering!"

"To be serious, Sir Henry," said I, putting my handkerchief to my eyes, "I *am* thinking of one who has but within this day or two ceased to be my patient! Believe me—believe me, my dear Sir Henry, her case—*very—closely* resembled the one you describe in your story! Oh, how sweet—how beautiful—how resigned!"

He made no reply, but seemed considering my words—as if with a reference to his own fiction.

"I can tell you, I think, something that will affect you, Sir Henry!" I continued.

"Ay! What is that? What is that?"

"She once knew *you!*"

"Knew me! What, intimately?"

"Very—VERY! She mentioned your name on her deathbed; she uttered a fervent prayer for you!"

"My God!" he exclaimed, removing his papers from his knee, and placing them on the table, and turning full towards me, that he might listen more attentively to me; "how astonishing! *Who* can it be?" he continued, putting his hand to his forehead—"Why, what was her name?"

I paused, and sickened at the contemplation of the possible crisis. "I—I—perhaps—it might not be *prudent* to mention her name"——

"Oh, do! do!" he interrupted me eagerly—"I know what you are afraid of; but—honour! Her name shall be safe with me! I cannot be base enough to talk of it!"

"Lady Anne Harleigh!" I uttered with a quivering lip.

"Po—po—poh!" he stammered, turning pale as ashes, and trembling



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violently. "What—wh—at do you mean? Are you talking about *my wife?*"

"Yes—your wife, my dear bereaved Sir Henry! But your little boy still lives to be a comfort to you!"

"——— the boy!" said he, uttering, or rather gasping a violent imprecation, continuing, in a swelling voice, his eye gleaming upon me, "You were talking about *my wife!*"

"For Heaven's sake, be calm—be calm—be calm," said I rising.

"My wife!" he continued exclaiming, not in the way of an inquiry, but simply *shouting* the words, while his face became transformed almost beyond recognition. * * I shall, however, spare the reader the scene which followed. He got calm and pacified by the time I took my leave, for I had pledged myself to come and play a game at billiards with him on the morrow. On quitting the chamber, I entered the private room of Dr Y——; and while he was putting some questions to me about Sir Henry, he suddenly became inaudible—invisible, for I was fainting with excitement and agitation, occasioned by the scene I have alluded to. * * *

"Depend upon it, my dear doctor, you are mistaken," said Dr Y——, pursuing the conversation, shortly after I had recovered, "Sir Henry's case is by no means hopeless—by no means!"

"I would I could think so! If his madness has stood *two* such tremendous assaults with impunity, rely upon it it is impregnable. It will not be accessible by any inferior—nay, by *any* other means whatever."

"Ah, quite otherwise—*experto crede!*" replied the quiet doctor, helping himself to a glass of wine; "the shocks you have alluded to have really, though invisibly, shaken the fortress; and now we will try what *sapping—undermining*—will do—well followed out in figure, by the way, is it not? But I'll tell you a remarkable case of a former patient of mine, which is quite in point."

"Pray, forgive me, my dear doctor—pray, excuse me at present. I really have no heart to listen to it; I am, besides, all in arrear with my day's work, for which I am quite, moreover, perfectly unfit, and will call again in a day or two."

"*N'importe*—Be it so—'twill not lose by the keeping," replied the doctor, good-humouredly; and shaking him by the hand, I hurried to my chariot, and drove off. Experience had certainly not *sharpened* the sensibilities of Dr Y——!

[Bear with me, kind reader! Suffer me to lay before you yet one or two brief concluding extracts from this mournful portion of my Diary. If your tears flow, if your feelings are touched, believe me it is not with romance—it is with the sorrows of actual life. "*It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men—and the living will lay it to his heart.*"]

*Nov. 9th to 14th inclusive.*—Between these periods I called several times at Somerfield House, but saw little alteration in Sir Henry's deportment or pursuits, except that he was at times, I heard, very thoughtful, and had entirely laid aside his tale—taking, in its place, to chess. He grew very intimate with the crazy gentleman before mentioned, who was imagined, both by himself and Sir Henry, to be the king. More than once the keeper warned Dr Y—— to interfere, for the purpose of separating them, for he feared lest they should be secretly concerting some dangerous scheme or other. Dr Y——watched them closely, but did not consider it necessary to interrupt their intercourse. I found Sir Henry, one evening, sitting with his friend, the king, and their two keepers, very boisterous over their wine. Sir Henry staggered towards me, on my entry, singing snatches of a drinking-song, which were attempted to be echoed by his majesty, who was plainly far gone. I remonstrated with the keepers, full of indignation and alarm at their allowing two madmen the use of wine.

"Lord, doctor," said one of them smiling, taking a decanter, and pour-

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ing out a glass of its contents, "taste it, and see how much it would take to intoxicate a man."

I did—it was toast and water, of which the two lunatics had drunk several decanters, complaining all the while of their being allowed nothing but sherry! I need hardly add, that they had, in a manner, *talked*, and laughed, and sung themselves tipsy! Sir Henry, with a hiccup—whether real or affected I know not—insisted on my joining them, and told his majesty of the *hoax* I had lately been playing upon him, by "getting up" his *own* "tale," and mystifying him by telling it to him of another. His majesty shouted with laughter.

*Wednesday, Nov.* 16.—This was the day appointed for the funeral of Lady Anne, which I was invited to attend. I set apart, therefore, a day for that melancholy, that sacred purpose. I was satisfied that no heavier heart could follow her to the grave than mine.

It was a fine frosty day. The sky was brightly, deeply blue, and the glorious sun was there, dazzling, but apparently not warming, the chilly earth. As I drove slowly down to the Hall about noon, with what aching eyes did I see here a scarlet-jacketed huntsman, there a farmer at his work whistling; while the cheery sparrows, fluttering about the bare twigs, and chirruping loudly, jarred upon my excited feelings, and brought tears into my eyes, as I recollected the words of the Scotch song,

Ye'll break my heart, ye merry birds!

In vain I strove to banish the hideous image of Sir Henry from my recollection—he seemed to stand gibbering over the corpse of his lady! ——Hall was a spacious building, and a blank desolate structure it looked from amidst the leafless trees—all its windows closed—nothing stirring about it but the black hearse, mourning coaches and carriages, with coachmen and servants in sable silk hat-bands. On descending and entering the Hall, I hastened out of the gloomy bustle of the undertaker's arrangements below, to the darkened drawing-room, which was filled with the distinguished relatives and friends of the deceased—a silent, mournful throng! Well, it was not long before her remains, together with those of her father, the Earl of ——, were deposited in the vault which held many members of their ancient family. I was not the only one whose feelings overpowered him during the ceremony, and unfitted me, in some measure, for the duty which awaited me on my return, of ministering professionally to the heart-broken sisters. Swoons, hysterics, sobs, and sighs, did I move amongst during the remainder of the day!—Nearly all the attendants of the funeral left the Hall soon afterwards to the undisturbed dominion of solitude and sorrow; but I was prevailed upon by Lord ——, Lady Anne's eldest brother, to continue all night, as Lady Julia's continued agitation threatened serious consequences.

It was at a late hour that we separated for our respective chambers. That allotted to me had been the one formerly occupied by Sir Henry and his lady, and was a noble, but, to me, gloomy room. Though past one o'clock, I did not think of getting into bed, but trimmed my lamp, drew a chair to the table beside the fire, and having brought with me pen, ink, and paper, began writing, amongst other things, some of the memoranda which are incorporated into this narrative, as I felt too excited to think of sleep. Thus had I been engaged for some twenty minutes or half an hour, when I laid down my pen to listen—for, unless my ears had deceived me, I heard the sound of soft music at a little distance. How solemn was the silence at that "witching hour!" Through the crimson curtains of the window, which I had partially drawn aside, was seen the moon, casting her lovely smiles upon the sleeping earth, all quiet as in her immediate presence. How tranquil was all before me, how mournful all within! The very room in which I was standing had been occupied, in happier times, by her whose remains had that day been deposited

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in their last cold resting-place! At length more dreary thoughts—of Somerfield—of its wretched insensate tenant, flitted across my mind. I drew back again the curtain, and, returning to the chair I had quitted, resumed my pen. Again, however, I heard the sound of music; I listened, and distinguished the tones of a voice, accompanied by a guitar, singing the melancholy air, "Charlie is my darling," with much simplicity and pathos. I stepped again to the window, for the singer was evidently standing close before it. I gently drew aside a little of the curtain, and saw two figures, one at a little distance, the other very near the window. The latter was the minstrel, who stood exactly as a Spaniard is represented in such circumstances—a short cloak over his shoulders; and the colour fled from my cheeks, my eyes were almost blinded, for I perceived it was—Sir Henry, accompanied by the wretch whom he treated as "the king!" I stood staring at him unseen, as if transfixed, till he completed his song. He paused. "They all sleep sound," he exclaimed with a sigh, looking up with a melancholy air at the windows—"Wake, lady-love, wake!" He began again to strike the strings of his guitar, and was commencing a gay air, when a window was opened overhead. He looked up suddenly—a faint shriek was heard from above—Sir Henry flung away his guitar, and, followed by his companion, sprung out of sight in a moment! Every one in the house was instantly roused. The shriek I had heard was that of Lady Elizabeth—the youngest sister of Lady Anne—who had recognised Sir Henry; and it was providential that I happened to be on the spot. Oh, what a dreadful scene ensued! Servants were sent out, as soon as they could be dressed, in all directions, in pursuit of the fugitives, who were not, however, discovered till daybreak. Sir Henry's companion was then found, lurking under one of the arches of a neighbouring bridge, half dead with cold; but he either could not, or would not, give any information respecting the baronet. Two keepers arrived post at the Hall by seven o'clock, in search of the fugitives.

It was inconceivable how the madmen could have escaped. They had been very busy the preceding day whispering together in the garden, but had art enough to disarm any suspicion which that circumstance might excite, by a seeming quarrel. Each retired in apparent anger to his apartment; and when the keepers came to summon them to supper, both had disappeared. It was supposed that they had mounted some of the numerous coaches that traversed the road adjoining, and their destination, therefore, baffled conjecture.

Advertisements were issued in all directions, offering a large reward for the capture of Sir Henry—but with no success. No tidings were received of him for upwards of a week; when he one day suddenly made his appearance at the Hall, towards dusk, very pale and haggard—his dress in a wretched state—and demanded admission of a new porter, as the owner of the house. Inquiry was soon made, and he was recognised with a shriek by some of the female domestics. He was, really, no longer a lunatic—though he was believed such for several days. He gave, however, unequivocal evidence of his restoration to reason—but the grief and agony occasioned by discovering the death of his lady, threw him into a nervous fever, which left him, at the end of five months, "more dead than alive." Had I not attended him throughout, I declare I could not have recognised Sir Henry Harleigh in the haggard, emaciated figure, closely muffled up from head to foot, and carried into an ample chariot-and-four, which was to convey him towards the Continent.

He never returned to England; but I often heard from him, and had the satisfaction of knowing that for several years he enjoyed tolerable health, though the prey of unceasing melancholy. The death of his son, however, which happened eight years after the

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period when the events above related occurred, was a voice from the grave, which he listened to with resignation. He died, and was buried in Italy, shortly after the publication of the first of these papers. I shall never forget that truly amiable, though unfortunate individual, whose extraordinary sufferings are here related under a disguise absolutely impenetrable to more than one or two living individuals. They will suffer the public to gather, undisturbed, the solemn instruction which I humbly hope and believe this narrative is calculated to afford, as a vivid and memorable illustration of that passage from Scripture already quoted, and with which, nevertheless, I conclude this melancholy history—"*And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled!*"

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# CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE MERCHANT'S CLERK.

Yet once more! O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude;
And, with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due!
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime—
Young Lycidas!*

Look, reader, once more with the eye and heart of sympathy, at a melancholy page in the book of human life—a sad one, indeed, and almost the last that will be opened by one who has laid several before you, and is about to take his departure!

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It was pouring with rain one Wednesday, in the month of March 18—, about twelve o'clock, and had been raining violently the whole morning. Only one patient had called upon me up to the hour just mentioned—for how could invalids stir out in such weather! The wind was cold and bitter—the aspect of things without, in short, most melancholy and cheerless. "There are one or two poor souls," thought I, with a sigh, as I stepped from the desk at which I had been occupied for more than an hour writing, and stood looking over the blinds into the deserted and almost deluged streets—"there are one or two poor souls that would certainly have been here this morning, according to appointment, but for this unfriendly weather. Their cases are somewhat critical—one of them especially—and yet they are not such as to warrant my apprehending the worst. I wish, by the way, I had thought of asking their addresses! Ah! for the future, I will make a point of taking down the residence of such as I may suspect to be in very humble or embarrassed circumstances. One can then, if necessary, call upon such persons—on such a day as this—at their own houses. There's that poor man, for instance, the bricklayer—he cannot leave his work except at breakfast-time—I wonder how his sick child comes on! Poor fellow! how anxious he looked yesterday, when he asked me what I thought of his child! And his wife bed-ridden! Really I'd make

* Milton.—*Lycidas.*

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a point of calling, if I knew where he lived! He can't afford a coach—that's out of the question. Well, it can't be helped, however!" With this exclamation, half uttered, I looked at my watch, rang the bell, and ordered the carriage to be at the door in a quarter of an hour. I was sealing one of the letters I had been writing, when I heard a knock at the street door, and in a few moments my servant showed a lady into the room. She was apparently about four or five and twenty; neatly but very plainly dressed; her features, despite an air of languor, as if from recent indisposition, without being strictly handsome, had a pleasing expression of frankness and spirit, and her address was easy and elegant. She was, however, evidently flurried. She "hoped she should not keep me at home—she could easily call again" —— I begged her to be seated; and, in a quiet tone—at the same time proceeding with what I was engaged upon, that she might have a moment's interval in which to recover her self-possession—made some observations about the weather.

"It is still raining hard, I perceive," said I; "did you come on foot? Bless me, madam—why, you seem wet through! Pray, come nearer the fire"—stirring it up into a cheerful blaze—"can any of the servants offer you any assistance? You look very chilly"——

"No, thank you, sir; I am rather wet, certainly, but I am accustomed to be out in the rain—I will, however, sit closer to the fire, if you please, and tell you in a few words my errand. I shall not detain you long, sir," she continued in a tone considerably more assured: "the fact is, I have received a letter this morning from a friend of mine in the country, a young lady, who is an invalid, and has written to request I would call immediately upon some experienced physician, and obtain, as far as can be, his real opinion upon her case—for she fancies, poor girl! that they are concealing what is really the matter with her!"

"Well! she must have stated her case remarkably well, ma'am," said I with a smile, "to enable me to give anything like a reasonable guess at her state without seeing her"——

"Oh—but I may be able to answer many of your questions, sir; for I am very well acquainted with her situation, and was a good deal with her not long ago."

"Ah—that's well. Then will you be so kind," giving a monitory glance at my watch, "as to say what you know of her case? The fact is, I've ordered the carriage to be here in about a quarter of an hour's time, and have a long day's work before me!"

"She is—let me see, sir—I should say about six years older than myself; that is, she is near thirty, or thereabouts. I should not think she was ever particularly strong. She's seen, poor thing! a good deal of trouble lately." She sighed.

"Oh—I see, I understand! A little *disappointment—there's* the seat of the mischief, I suppose?" I interrupted, smiling, and placing my hand over my heart. "Isn't this really, now, the whole secret?"

"Why—the fact is—certainly, I believe—yes, I may say that love has had a good deal to do with her present illness—for it is *really* illness! She has been"——she paused, hesitated, and—as I fancied—coloured slightly—"crossed in love—yes! She was to have been—I mean—that is, she ought to have been married last autumn, but for this sad affair"—— I bowed, looking again at my watch, and she went on more quickly to describe her friend as being naturally rather delicate—"that this 'disappointment' had occasioned her a great deal of annoyance and agitation—that it had left her now in a very low nervous way—and, in short, her friend suspected herself to be falling into a decline. That about two months ago she had had the misfortune to be run over by a chaise, the pole of which struck her on the right chest, and the horses' hoofs also trampled upon her, but no ribs were broken"——

"Ah, *this* is the most serious part of the story, ma'am—this looks like real illness! Pray, proceed ma'am. I suppose your friend after this complained

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of much pain about the chest—is it so? Was there any spitting of blood?"

"Yes, a little—no—I mean—let me see"—— here she took out of her pocket a letter, and, unfolding it, cast her eye over it for a moment or two, as if to refresh her memory by looking at her friend's statement.

"May I be allowed, ma'am, to look at the letter in which your friend describes her case?" I inquired, holding out my hand.

"There are some private matters contained in it, sir," she replied quickly; "the fact is, there was some blood-spitting at the time, which I believe has not yet quite ceased."

"And does she complain of pain in the chest?"

"Yes—particularly in the right side."

"Is she often feverish at night and in the morning?"

"Yes—very—that is, her hands feel very hot, and she is restless and irritable."

"Is there any perspiration?"

"Occasionally a good deal—during the night."

"Any cough?"

"Yes, at times very troublesome, she says."

"Pray, how long has she had it?—I mean, had she it before the accident you spoke of?"

"I first noticed it—let me see—ah, about a year after she was married."

"*After she was married!*" I echoed, darting a keen glance at her. She coloured violently, and stammered confusedly——

"No, no, sir—I meant about a year after the time when she *expected* to have been married."

There was something not a little curious and puzzling in all this. "Can you tell me, ma'am, what sort of a cough it is?" I inquired, shifting my chair, so that I might obtain a distincter view of her features. She perceived what I was about, I think—for she seemed to change colour a little, and to be on the verge of shedding tears. I repeated my question. She said that the cough was at first very slight; so slight that her friend had thought nothing of it, but at length it became a dry and painful one. She began to turn very pale; and a suspicion of the real state of the case flashed across my mind.

"Now, tell me, ma'am, candidly—confess! Are not you speaking of *yourself?* You really look ill!"

She trembled, but assured me emphatically that I was mistaken. She appeared about to put some question to me, when her voice failed her, and her eyes, wandering to the window, filled with tears.

"Forgive me, sir! I am so anxious about my friend,"—she sobbed—"she is a dear, kind, good"——her agitation increased.

"Calm—pray, calm yourself, ma'am—do not distress yourself unnecessarily! You must not let your friendly sympathies overcome you in this way, or you will be unable to serve your friend as you wish—as she has desired!"

I handed to her a bottle of smelling salts, and after pausing for a few moments, her agitation subsided.

"Well," she began again, tremulously, "what do you think of her case, sir?—you may tell me candidly, sir," she was evidently making violent struggles to conceal her emotions—"for I assure you I will never make an improper use of what you may say—indeed I will not!—What do you really think of her case?"

"Why—if all that you have said be correct, I own I fear it is rather a discouraging case—certainly, a bad case," I replied, looking at her scrutinisingly. "You have mentioned some symptoms that are very unfavourable."

"Do you—think—her case *hopeless*, sir?" she inquired in a feeble tone, and looking at me with sorrowful intensity.

"Why, that is a very difficult question to answer—in her absence. One ought to see her—to hear her tell her own story—to ask a thousand little questions that cannot be answered at second-hand. I suppose, by the way, that she is under the care of a regular professional man?"

"Yes, I believe so—no, I am not sure,—she *has* been, I believe."

I now felt satisfied that she was

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speaking of herself. I paused, scarce knowing what to say. "Are her circumstances easy? Could she go to a warmer climate in the spring, or early part of the summer? I really think that change of scene would do her greater good than anything I could prescribe for her."

She sighed. "It might be so; but—I know it could not be done. Circumstances, I believe"——

"Is she living with her family? Could not *they*"——

"Oh no, there's no hope *there*, sir!" she replied with sudden impetuosity. "No, no; they would see both of us perish before they would lift a finger to save us," she added, with increasing vehemence of tone and manner. "So now it's all out—my poor, wretched husband!" She became very hysterical. The mystery was now dispelled—it was her husband's case that she had been all the while inquiring about. I saw it all! Poor soul, to gain my candid, my *real* opinion, she had devised an artifice, to the execution of which she was unequal, over-estimating her own strength, or rather not calculating upon the severe tests she would have to encounter.

Ringing the bell, I summoned a female servant, who, with my wife (she had heard the sudden cries of my patient), instantly made her appearance, and paid all necessary attentions to the mysterious sufferer, as surely I might call her. The letter from which—in order to aid her little artifice—she had affected to read, had fallen upon the floor. It was merely a blank sheet of paper, folded in the shape of a letter, and directed, in a lady's handwriting, to "Mrs Elliott, No. 5, —— Street." This I put into my pocket-book. She had also, in falling, dropped a small piece of paper, evidently containing my intended fee, neatly folded up. This I slipped into the reticule which lay beside her.

From what scene of wretchedness had this unhappy lady come to me?

The zealous services of my wife and her maid presently restored my patient, at least to consciousness, and her first languid look was one of gratitude for their assistance. She then attempted, but in vain, to speak, and her tears flowed fast. "Indeed, indeed, sir, I am no impostor! and yet I own I have deceived you! but pity me! Have mercy on a being quite forsaken and broken-hearted! I meant to pay you your usual fee, sir, all the while. I only wished to get your true opinion about my unhappy husband. Oh, how very, very, very wretched I am! what is to become of us! So, my poor husband—there's no hope! Oh that I had been content with ignorance of your fate!" She sobbed bitterly, and my worthy wife exhibited so little firmness and presence of mind, as she stood beside her suffering sister, that I found it necessary gently to remove her from the room. What a melancholy picture of grief was before me in Mrs Elliott—if that were her name! Her expressive features were flushed, and bedewed with weeping; her eyes swollen, and her dark hair, partially dishevelled, gave a wildness to her countenance, which added to the effect of her incoherent exclamations—"I do—I *do* thank you, sir, for your candour. I feel that you have told me the truth! But what is to become of us? My most dreadful fears are confirmed! But I ought to have been home before this, and am only keeping you"——

"Not at all, ma'am—pray don't"——

"But my husband, sir, is ill—and there is no one to keep the child but him. I ought to have been back long ago!" She rose feebly from her chair, hastily readjusted her hair, and replaced her bonnet, preparing to go. She seemed to miss something, and looked about the floor, obviously embarrassed at not discovering the object of her search.

"It is in your reticule, ma'am," I whispered—"and, unless you would affront and wound me, there let it remain. I know what you have been looking for—hush! do not think of it again. My carriage is at the door—shall I take you as far as —— Street? I am driving past it."

"No, sir, I thank you; but—not for the world! My husband has no idea that I have been here; he thinks I have

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been only to the druggist. I would not have him know of this visit on any account. He would instantly suspect all." She grew again excited. "Oh, what a wretch I am! How I must play the hypocrite! I must look happy, and say that I have hope when I am despairing—and he dying daily before my eyes! Oh, how terrible will home be after this! But how long have I suspected it all."

I succeeded, at length, in allaying her agitation, imploring her to strive to regain her self-possession before reappearing in the presence of her husband. She promised to contrive some excuse for summoning me shortly to see her husband, as if in the first instance—as though it were the first time I had seen or heard of either of them; and assured me that she would call upon me again in a few days' time. "But, sir," she whispered hesitatingly, as I accompanied her through the hall to the street door, "I am really afraid we cannot afford to trouble you often."

"Madam, you will greatly grieve and offend me if you ever allude to this again before *I* mention it to you.—Indeed you will, ma'am," I added peremptorily, but kindly; and reiterating my injunctions, that she should let me soon see her, or hear from her again, I closed the door upon her, satisfied that ere long would be laid before me another dark page in the volume of human life.

Having been summoned to visit a patient somewhere in the neighbourhood of —— Street that evening—and being on foot, it struck me, as it was beginning again to rain heavily, that if I were to step into some one of the little shops close by, I might be sheltered awhile from the rain, and also possibly gain some information as to the character and circumstances of my morning visitor. I pitched upon a small shop that was "licensed" to sell everything, but especially groceries. The proprietor was a little lame old man, who was busy, as I entered, making up small packets of snuff and tobacco. He allowed the plea of the rain, and permitted me to sit down on the bench near the window. A couple of candles shed their dull light over the miscellaneous articles of minor merchandise with which the shop was stuffed. He looked like an old rat in his hoard.

He was civil and communicative; and I was not long in gaining the information I desired. He knew the Elliotts; they lived at number five, up two pair of stairs—but had not been there above three or four months. He thought Mr Elliott was "ailing"—and, for the matter of that, his wife didn't look the strongest woman in the world.

"And pray what business, or calling, is he?" I inquired. The old man put his spectacles back upon his bald wrinkled head, and after musing a moment, replied, "Why, now, I can't take upon me to say, precisely like—but I think he's something in the city, in the mercantile line—at least I've got it into my head that he *has* been such; but he also teaches music, and I know she sometimes takes in needlework."

"Needlework! does she indeed?" I echoed, taking her letter from my pocket-book, and looking at the beautiful—the fashionable hand in which the direction was written, and which, I felt confident, was her own. "Ah! then I suppose they're not over well to do in the world?"

"Why—you a'n't a-going to do anything to them, sir, are you? May I ask if you're a lawyer, sir?"

"No, indeed, I am not," said I with a smile—"nor is this a writ! It's only the direction of a letter, I assure you; I feel a little interested about these people; at the same time, I don't know much about them, as you may perceive. Were not you saying that you thought them in difficulties?"

"Why," he replied, somewhat reassured—"maybe you're not far from the mark, in *that*, either. They deal here—and they pay me for what they have—but their custom a'n't very heavy! 'Deed they has uncommon little in the grocery way, but then they pays reg'lar—and that's better than them that has a good deal, and yet doesn't pay at all—a'n't it, sir?" I assented. "They used, when they

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first came here, to have six-and-sixpenny tea, and lump sugar; but this week or two back they've had only five-and-sixpenny tea, and moist sugar—but *my* five-and-sixpenny tea is an uncommon good article, and as good as many people's six-shilling tea! only smell it, sir!"—and whisking himself round, he briskly dislodged a japanned canister, and whipping off the lid, put a handful of the contents into it. The conclusion I arrived at was not a very favourable one—the stuff he had handed me seemed an abominable compound of raisin-stalks and sloe-leaves. "They're uncommon economical, sir," he continued, putting back again his precious commodity, "for they makes two or three ounces of this do for a week—unless they goes elsewhere, which I don't think they do, by the way—and I'm sure they oughtn't; for, though I say it as shouldn't, they might go farther and fare worse, and without going a mile from here either—hem! By the way, Mrs Elliott was in here not an hour ago, for a moment, asking for some sago, because she said Mr Elliott had taken a fancy to have some sago milk for his supper to-night—it was very unlucky, I hadn't half a handful left! so she was obliged to go to the druggist at the other end of the street. Poor thing, she looked so vexed—for she has quite a confidence, like, in what she gets here!"

"True!—very likely!—You said, by the way, you thought he taught music? what kind of music?"

"Why, sir, he's rather a good hand at the flute, his landlady says—so he comes into me about a month since, and he says to me, 'Bennet,' says he, 'may I direct letters for me to be left at your shop? I'm going to put an advertisement in the newspaper.'—'That,' says I, 'depends on what it's about—what are you advertising for?' (not meaning to be rude, hows'ever)—and he says, says he—'Why, I've taken it into my head, Mr Bennet, to teach the flute; and I'm a-going to try to get some one to learn it to. So he put the advertisement in; but he didn't get more than one letter, and that brought him a young lad—but he didn't stay long. 'Twas a beautiful black flute, sir, with silver on it; for Mrs Hooper, his landlady—she's an old friend of my mistress, sir—showed it to us one Sunday, when we took a cup of tea with her, and the Elliotts was gone out for a walk. I don't think he can teach it *now*, sir," he continued, dropping his voice; "for, betwixt you and I, old Browning the pawnbroker, a little way up on the left-hand side, has a flute in his window that's the very exact image of what Mrs Hooper showed us that night I was speaking of. You understand me, sir?—pawned—or sold—I'll answer for it—a-hem!"

"Ah, very probable — yes, very likely!" I replied, sighing—hoping my gossiping host would go on.

"And betwixt you and I, sir," he resumed, "it wasn't a bad thing for him to get rid of it, either—for Mrs Hooper told us that Mr Elliott wasn't strong-like to play on it; and she used to hear Mrs Elliott, (she is an uncommon agreeable young woman, sir, to look at, and looks like one that has been better off.) I was a-saying, however, that Mrs Hooper used now and then to hear Mrs Elliott cry a good deal about his playing on the flute, and 'spostulate to him on the account of it, and say, 'you know it isn't a good thing for you, dear.'—Nor was it, sir—the doctors would say!"

"Poor fellow!"—I exclaimed with a sigh, not meaning to interrupt my companion—"of all things on earth—the *flute!*"

"Ah!" replied the worthy grocer, "things *are* in a bad way when they come to that pass—aren't they? But, Lord, sir!" dropping his voice, and giving a hurried glance towards a door, opening, I suppose, into his sitting-room—"there's nothing particular in *that*, after all. My mistress and I, even, have done such things before now, at a push, when we've been hard driven! You know, sir, poverty's no sin—is it?"

"God forbid, indeed, my worthy friend!" I replied, as a customer entered, to purchase a modicum of cheese or bacon: and thanking Mr Bennet for his civility in affording

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me so long a shelter, I quitted his shop. The rain continued, and, as is usually the case, no hackney-coach made its appearance till I was nearly wet through. My interest in poor Mrs Elliott and her husband was greatly increased by what I had heard from the gossiping grocer. How distinctly, though perhaps unconsciously, had he sketched the downward progress of respectable poverty!—I should await the next visit of Mrs Elliott with some eagerness and anxiety. Nearly a week, however, elapsed before I again heard of Mrs Elliott, who called at my house one morning when I had been summoned to pay an early visit to a patient in the country. After having waited nearly an hour for me, she was obliged to leave, after writing the following lines on the back of an old letter.

"Mrs Elliott begs to present her respects to Doctor ——, and to inform him, that, if quite convenient to him, she would feel favoured by his calling on Mr Elliott any time to-day or to-morrow. She begs to remind him of his promise, not to let Mr Elliott suppose that Mrs Elliott has told him anything about Mr Elliott, except *generally* that he is poorly. The address is, No. 5, —— Street, near —— Square."

About three o'clock that afternoon, I was at their lodgings in —— Street. No. 5 was a small decent draper's shop; and a young woman, sitting at work behind the counter, referred me, on inquiring for Mr Elliott, to the private door, which she said I could easily push open—that the Elliotts lived on the second floor—but she thought that Mrs Elliott had just gone out. Following her directions, I soon found myself ascending the narrow staircase. On approaching the second floor, the door of the apartment I took to be Mr Elliott's was standing nearly wide open; and the scene which presented itself I paused for a few moments to contemplate. Almost fronting the door, at a table, on which were several huge ledgers and account-books, sat a young man, apparently about thirty, who seemed to have just dropped asleep over a wearisome task. His left hand supported his head, and in his right hand was a pen which he seemed to have fallen asleep almost in the act of using. Propped up, on the table, between two huge books, a little towards his left-hand side, sat a child, seemingly a little boy, and a very pretty one, so engrossed with some plaything or another as not to perceive my approach. I *felt* that this was Mr Elliott, and stopped for a few seconds to observe him. His countenance was manly, and had plainly been once very handsome. It was now considerably emaciated, overspread with a sallow hue, and wore an expression of mingled pain and exhaustion. The thin white hand holding the pen, also bespoke the invalid. His hair was rather darker than his wife's—and being combed aside, left exposed to view an ample well-formed forehead. In short, he seemed a very interesting person. He was dressed in black, his coat being buttoned, evidently for warmth's sake; for though it was March, and the weather very bleak and bitter, there was scarce any appearance of fire in about the smallest grate I ever saw. The room was small, but very clean and comfortable, though not overstocked with furniture—what there was being of the most ordinary kind. A little noise I made attracted, at length, the child's attention. It turned round, started on seeing a stranger, and disturbed its father, whose eyes looked suddenly but heavily at his child, and then at my approaching figure.

"Pray walk in," said he, with a kind of mechanical civility, but evidently not completely roused from sleep—"I—I—am very sorry—the accounts are not yet balanced—very sorry—I have been at them almost the whole day"——He suddenly paused, and recollected himself. He had, it seems, mistaken me at the moment for some one whom he had expected.

"Dr ——," said I, bowing, and advancing.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, sir—Pray walk in, and take a seat."—I did so.

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—"I believe Mrs Elliott called upon you this morning, sir? I am sorry she has just stepped out, but she will return soon. She will be very sorry she was not at home when you called."

"I should have been happy to see Mrs Elliott—but I understood from a few lines she left at my house, that this visit was to be paid to yourself—is it not so? Can I be of any assistance?"

"Certainly!" he replied with a languid air, "I feel far from well, sir. I have been in but middling health for some time—but my wife thinks me, I am sure, much worse than I really am, and frets herself a good deal about me."

I proceeded to inquire fully into his case; and he showed very great intelligence and readiness in answering all my questions. He had, he said, detected in himself, some years ago, symptoms of a liver complaint, which a life of much confinement and anxiety had since contributed to aggravate. He mentioned the accident alluded to by Mrs Elliott; and when he had concluded a very terse and intelligent statement of his case, I had formed a pretty decisive opinion upon it. I thought there was a strong tendency to hepatic phthisis, but that it might, with proper care, be arrested, if not even overcome. I expressed myself in very cautious terms.

"Do you really, candidly think, sir, that I have a reasonable chance of recovering my health?" he inquired with a sigh, at the same time folding in his arms his little boy, whose concerned features, fixed in silence—now upon his father, and then upon me—as each of us spoke, would almost have led me to imagine that he appreciated the grave import of our conversation.

"Yes—I certainly think it probable—very probable—that you would recover, provided, as I said before, you used the means I pointed out."

"And the chief of those means are—relaxation and country air?"

"Certainly."

"You consider them essential?" he inquired despondingly.

"Undoubtedly. Repose, both bodily and mental—change of scene, fresh air, and *some* medical treatment"——

He listened in silence, his eyes fixed on the floor, while an expression of profound melancholy overspread his countenance. He seemed absorbed in a painful reverie. I fancied that I could not mistake the subjects of his thoughts; and ventured to interrupt them, by saying in a low tone—"It would not be *very* expensive, Mr Elliott, after all"——

"Ah, sir—that *is* what I am thinking about," he replied with a deep sigh—and relapsed into his former troubled silence.

"Suppose—suppose, sir, I were able to go into the country and rest a little, *a twelvemonth hence*, and in the meantime attend as much as possible to my health—is it probable that it would not *then* be too late?"

"Oh, come, Mr Elliott—let us prefer the sunshine to the cloud," said I with a cheerful air, hearing a quick step advancing to the door, which was opened, as I expected, by Mrs Elliott, who entered, breathless with haste.

"How do you do, ma'am—Mrs Elliott, I presume?" said I, wishing to put her on her guard, and prevent her appearing to have seen me before.

"Yes, sir—Mrs Elliott," said she, catching the hint—and then turning quickly to her husband, "how are you, love? I hope Henry has been good with you!"

"Very—he's been a very good little boy," replied Elliott, surrendering him to Mrs Elliott, whom he was struggling to reach.

"But how are you, dear?" repeated his wife anxiously.

"Pretty well," he replied, adding with a faint smile, at the same time pushing his foot against mine, under the table—"As you would have Dr ——, he is here; but we can't make out why you thought fit to summon him in such haste."

"A very little suffices to alarm a lady," said I, with a smile. "I was sorry, Mrs Elliott, that you had to wait so long for me this morning—I hope it did not inconvenience you?"—I began to think how I should manage to de-

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cline the fee I perceived they were preparing to give me, for I was obliged to leave, and drew on my gloves. "We've had a long *tête-à-tête*, Mrs Elliott, in your absence. I must commit him to your gentle care—you will prove the better physician. He must submit to you in everything; you must not allow him to exert himself too much over matters like these," pointing to the huge folios lying upon the table—"he must keep regular hours—and if you could all of you go to lodgings on the outskirts of the town, the fresh air would do all of you a world of good. You must undertake the case, ma'am—you must really pledge yourself to this"——the poor couple exchanged hurried glances, in silence. *He* attempted a smile. "What a sweet little fellow is this!" said I, taking their little child into my arms—a miracle of neatness and cleanliness—and affecting to be eagerly engaged with him. He came to me readily, and forthwith began an incomprehensible address to me about "Da—da"—"pa—pa"—"ma—ma," and other similarly mysterious terms, which I was obliged to cut short by promising to come and talk again with him in a day or two. "Good-day, Master Elliott!" said I, giving him back to his father, who at the same time slipped a guinea in my hand. I took it easily. "Come, sirrah," said I, addressing the child—"will you be my banker?" shutting his little fingers on the guinea.

"Pardon me—excuse me, doctor," interrupted Mr Elliott, blushing scarlet, "this must not be. I really cannot"——

"Ah! may I not employ what banker I like?—Well—I'll hear what you have to say about it when we meet again.—Farewell for a day or two,"—and with these words, bowing hastily to Mrs Elliott, who looked at me, through her tear-filled eyes, unutterable things, I hurried down stairs. It may seem sufficiently absurd to dwell so long upon the insignificant circumstance of declining a fee—a thing done by my brethren daily—often as a matter of course—but it is a matter that has often occasioned me no inconsiderable embarrassment. 'Tis really often a difficult thing to refuse a fee proffered by those one knows to be unable to afford it, so as not to make them feel uneasy under the sense of an obligation—to wound delicacy or offend an honourable pride. I had, only a few days before, by the way, almost *asked* for my guinea from a gentleman worth many thousands a-year, and who dropped the fee into my hand as though it were some of his heart's blood.

I had felt much gratified with the appearance and manners of Mr and Mrs Elliott, and disposed to cultivate their acquaintance. Both were evidently oppressed with melancholy, which was not, however, sufficient to prevent my observing the simplicity and manliness of the husband, the sweetness and frankness of the wife. How her eyes devoured him with fond anxiety! Often, while conversing with them, a recollection of some of the touching little details communicated by their garrulous grocer brought the tears for an instant to my eyes. Possibly poor Mrs Elliott had been absent, either seeking employment for her needle, or taking home what she had been engaged upon—both of them thus labouring to support themselves by means to which *she*, at least, seemed utterly unaccustomed, as far as one could judge from her demeanour and conversation. Had they pressed me much longer about accepting my fee, I am sure I should have acted foolishly; for when I held their guinea in my hand, the thoughts of their weekly allowance of an ounce or two of tea—their brown sugar—his pawned flute—almost determined me to defy all delicacy, and return them their guinea doubled. I could enter into every feeling, I thought, which agitated their hearts, and appreciate the despondency, the hopelessness with which they listened to my mention of the indispensable necessity of change of scene and repose. Probably, while I was returning home, they were mingling bitter tears as they owned to one another the impossibility of adopting my suggestions; he feeling and she

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fearing—neither, however, daring to express it—that his days were numbered—that he must toil to the last for a scanty livelihood—and even then leave his wife and child, it seemed but too probable, destitute—that, in the sorrowful language of Burns,

> Still caring, despairing
> Must be his bitter doom;
> His woes here, will close ne'er
> But with the closing tomb.*

I felt sure that there was some secret and grievous source of misery in the background, and often thought of the expressions she had frantically uttered when at my house. Had either of them married against the wishes of a proud and unrelenting family? Little did I think that I had, on that very day which first brought me acquainted with Mrs Elliott, paid a professional visit to one fearfully implicated in the infliction of their present sufferings!—But I anticipate.

I need not particularise the steps by which I became at length familiarly acquainted with Mr and Mrs Elliott. I found them for a long while extremely reserved on the subject of their circumstances, except as far as an acknowledgment that their pecuniary resources were somewhat precarious. He was, or rather, it seemed, had been, a clerk in a merchant's counting-house; but ill-health obliged him at length to quit his situation, and seek for such occasional employment as would admit of being attended to at his own lodgings. His labours in this way were, I perceived, notwithstanding my injunctions and his promises, of the most intense and unremitting, and, I feared, ill-requited description. But with what heart could I continue my remonstrances, when I felt convinced that thus he must toil, or starve? She also was forced to contribute her efforts towards their support, as I often saw her eagerly and rapidly engaged upon dresses and other articles too splendid to be for her own use. I could not help, one day, in the fullness of my heart, seeing her thus engaged, telling her that I had in early days, since my marriage, seen my wife similarly engaged. She looked at me with surprise for a few moments, and burst into tears. She forced off her rising emotions; but she was from that moment aware that I fully saw and appreciated her situation. It was on a somewhat similar occasion that she and her husband were at length induced to tell me their little history; and before giving the reader an account of what fell under my own personal observation, I shall lay before him, in my own way, the substance of several painfully interesting conversations with this most unfortunate couple. Let not the ordinary reader spurn details of everyday life, such as will here follow:

> Nor *grandeur* hear with a disdainful smile
> The short and simple annals of the poor!

Owing to a terrible domestic calamity, it became necessary that Henry Elliott, an only son, educating at Oxford, and destined for the army, should suddenly quit the University, and seek a livelihood by his own exertions in London. The event which occasioned this sudden blight to his prospects, was the suicide of his father, Major Elliott, whose addiction to gambling having for a long time seriously embarrassed his affairs, and nearly broken the heart of his wife, at length led him to commit the fatal act above spoken of. His widow survived the shock scarce a twelvemonth, and her unfortunate son was then left alone in the world, and almost entirely destitute. The trifling sum of ready money which remained in his possession, after burying his mother, was exhausted, and the scanty pittance afforded by relatives withdrawn, on the ground that he ought now to support himself, when his occasional inquiries after a situation at length led to the information that there was a vacancy for an outer-clerk in the great house of Hillary, Hungate, and Company, Mincing Lane, in the City. He succeeded in satisfying the junior partner, after submitting to sundry humiliating inquiries, of his respectability and trustworthiness; and he was forthwith received into the establishment, at a salary of £60 per annum.

* *Despondency*, an Ode.

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It was a sad day for poor Elliott when he sold off almost all his college books, and a few other remnants of gay and happy days, gone by probably for ever, for the purpose of equipping himself becomingly for his new and humble functions. He wrote an excellent hand; and being of a decided mathematical turn, the arithmetic of the counting-house was easily mastered. What dismal drudgery had he henceforth daily to undergo! The tyranny of the upper clerks reminded him, with a pang, of the petty tyranny he had both experienced and inflicted at the public school where he had been educated. How infinitely more galling and intolerable was his present bondage! Two-thirds of the day he was kept constantly on foot, hurrying from place to place, with bills, letters, &c., and on other errands; and—especially on the foreign post nights—he was detained slaving sometimes till nine or ten o'clock at night, copying letters, and assisting in making entries and balancing accounts, till his pen almost dropped from his wearied fingers. He was allowed an hour in the middle of the day for dinner—and even this little interval was often broken in upon to such an extent as proved seriously prejudicial to his health. After all the labours of the day, he had to trudge from Mincing Lane, along the odious City Road up to almost the extremity of Islington, where were situated his lodgings—*i.e.*, a little back bedroom, on the third floor, serving at once for his sitting and sleeping room, and for the use of which he paid at the rate of seven shillings a-week, exclusive of extras. Still he conformed to his cheerless lot, calmly and resolutely—with a true practical stoicism that did him honour. His regular and frugal habits enabled him to subsist upon his scanty salary with decency, if not comfort, and without running into debt—that infallible destructive of all peace of mind and self-respect! His sole enjoyment was an occasional hour in the evening, spent in reading, and retracing some of his faded acquisitions in mathematics. Though a few of his associates were piqued at what they considered his sullen and inhospitable disposition, yet his obliging manners, his easy but melancholy deportment, his punctuality and exactitude in all his engagements, soon gained him the good-will of his brethren in the office, and occasionally even an indication of satisfaction on the part of some one of his august employers. Thus, at length, Elliott overcame the numerous *desagrémens* of his altered situation, seeking in constant employment to forget both the gloom and gaieties of the past. Two or three years passed over, Elliott continuing thus steadily in his course; and his salary, as a proof of the approbation of his employers, had been annually increased by £10 till he was placed in comparative affluence by the receipt of a salary of £90. His severe exertions, however, insensibly impaired a constitution never very vigorous, and he bore with many a fit of indisposition, rather than incur the expense of medical attendance. It may be added, that Elliott was a man of gentlemanly exterior, and engaging deportment—and then let us pass to a very different person.

Mr Hillary, the head of the firm, a man of very great wealth, had risen from being a mere errand-boy to his present eminence in the mercantile world, through a rare combination of good fortune with personal merit—*merit*, as far as concerns a talent for business, joined with prudence and enterprise. If ever there came a man within the terms of Burke's famous philippic, it was Mr Hillary. His only object was money-making; he knew nothing, cared for nothing beyond it; till the constant contemplation of his splendid gains, led his desires into the train of personal aggrandisement. With the instinctive propensities of a low and coarse mind, he became as tyrannical and insolent in success, as in adversity he had been mean and abject. No spark of generous or worthy feeling had, indeed, ever been struck from the flinty heart of Jacob Hillary, of the firm of Hillary, Hungate, and Company!—He was the idol of a constant throng of

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wealth-worshippers; to everybody else, he was an object either of contempt or terror. He had married the widow of a deceased partner, by whom he had had several children, of whom one only lived beyond infancy; a generous, high-spirited, enthusiastic girl, whom her purse-proud father had destined, in his own weak and vain ambition, to become the wearer of a coronet. On this dazzling object were Mr Hillary's eyes fixed with unwavering earnestness; he desired and longed to pour the tide of his gold through the channel of a peerage. In person, Mr Hillary was of the middle size, but gross and corpulent. There was no intellect in his shining bald head, fringed with bristling white hair—nor was there any expression in his harsh and coarse features but such as faithfully adumbrated his character as above described.

This was the individual who, in stepping one morning rather hastily from his carriage, at his counting-house door in Mincing Lane, fell from the carriage step, most severely injuring his right ankle and shoulder. The injuries he received upon this occasion kept him confined for a long period to his bed, and for a still longer to an easy-chair, in the back drawing-room of his spacious mansion near Highbury. As soon as he was able to attend to business, he issued orders that, as Elliott was the clerk whose residence was nearest to Bullion House, he should attend him every morning for an hour or two on matters of business, carrying Mr Hillary's orders to the City, and especially bringing him, day by day, in a sealed envelope, *his banker's book!* A harassing post this proved for poor Elliott. Severe discipline had trained his temper to bear more than most men; and on these occasions it was tried to the uttermost. Mr Hillary's active and energetic mind, kept thus in comparative and compulsory seclusion from the only concerns he cared for, or that could occupy it—always excepting the one great matter already alluded to—his imperious and irritable temper became almost intolerable. Elliott would certainly have thrown up his employment under Mr Hillary in disgust and despair, had it not been for one circumstance—the presence of Miss Hillary—whose sweet appealing looks day after day melted away the resolution with which Elliott every morning came before her choleric and overbearing father, although they could not mitigate that father's evil temper, or prevent its manifestations. He insisted on her spending the greater part of every day in his presence, nor would allow her to quit it even at the periods when Elliott made his appearance. The first casual and hasty glance that he directed towards her, satisfied him that he had, in earlier and happy days, been several times in general society with her—her partner even in the dance. *Now*, however, he dared not venture to exhibit the slightest indication of recognition; and she, if struck by similar recollections, thought fit to conceal them, and behave precisely as though she then saw and heard of Mr Elliott for the first time in her life. He could not, of course, find fault with her for this; but he felt it deeply and bitterly. He little knew how much he wronged her! She instantly recollected him—and it was only the dread of her father that restrained her from a friendly greeting. Having once adopted such a line of conduct, it became necessary to adhere to it—and she did. But could she prevent her *heart* going out in sympathy towards the poor, friendless, unoffending clerk, whom her father treated more like a mere menial than a respectable and confidential servant—him whom she knew to be

> Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
> Fallen from his high estate?

Every day that she saw him, her woman's heart throbbed with pity towards him; and pity is indeed akin to love. How favourably for him did his temper and demeanour contrast, in *her* eyes, with those of her father!—And she saw him placed daily in a situation calculated to exhibit his real character—his disposition, whether for good or evil. The fact was, that he

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had become an object of deep interest —even of love—to her, long before the thought had ever occurred to him that she viewed him, from day to day, with feelings different from those with which she would look at the servant that stood at her father's sideboard, at dinner. His mind was kept constantly occupied by his impetuous employer, and his hundred questions about everything that had or had not happened every day in the City. Thus for nearly three months had these unconscious lovers been brought daily for an hour or two into each other's presence. He had little idea of the exquisite pain occasioned Miss Hillary by her father's harsh and unfeeling treatment of him, nor of the many timid attempts she made, in his absence, to prevent the recurrence of such treatment; and as for the great man, Mr Hillary, it never crossed his mind as being possible that two young hearts could by any means, when in different stations of society, one rich, the other poor, be warmed into a feeling of regard, and even love for one another.

One afternoon Elliott was obliged to come a second time that day from the City, bearing important despatches from Mincing Lane to Mr Hillary, who was sitting in his invalid chair, flanked on one hand by his daughter, and on the other by a little table on which stood wine and fruit. Poor Elliott looked, as well he might, exhausted with his long and rapid walk through the fervid sunshine.

"Well, sir—what now?" said her father quickly and peremptorily, at the same time eagerly stretching forth his hand to receive a letter which Elliott had presented to him.

"Humph! Sit down there, sir, for a few minutes!" Elliott obeyed. Miss Hillary, who had been reading, touched with Elliott's pale and wearied look, whispered to her father—"Papa—Mr Elliott looks dreadfully tired; may I offer him a glass of wine?"

"Yes, yes," replied Mr Hillary hastily, without removing his eyes from the letter he had that instant opened. Miss Hillary instantly poured out a glass of wine; and as Elliott approached to take it from the table, with a respectful bow, his eye encountered hers, which was instantly withdrawn —but not before it had cast a glance upon him, that electrified him; that fell suddenly like a spark of fire amid the combustible feelings of a most susceptible but subdued heart. It fixed the fate of their lives. The train so long laid had been at length unexpectedly ignited, and the confounded clerk returned, or rather staggered towards his chair, fancying that everything in the room was whirling around him. It was well for both of them that Mr Hillary was at that eventful moment absorbingly engaged with a letter announcing the sudden arrival of three ships with large cargoes of an article of which he had been attempting a monopoly, and in doing so had sunk a very large sum of ready money. In vain did the conscious and confused girl—confused as Elliott—remove her chair to the window, with her back turned towards him, and attempt to proceed with the book she had been reading. Her head seemed in a whirlpool.

"Get me my desk, Mary, immediately," said her father suddenly.

"No, indeed, papa, you didn't," replied Miss Hillary, as suddenly, for her father's voice had recalled her from a strange reverie.

"My desk, Mary—my desk, d'ye hear?" repeated her father, in a peremptory manner, still conning over the letter which told him, in effect, that he would return to bed that night four or five thousand pounds poorer than he had risen from it—ignorant, however, that within the last few moments, in his very presence, had happened that which was to put an end for ever to all his vain and gaudy dreams of a coronet glittering upon his daughter's brow!

Miss Hillary obeyed her father's second orders, carefully looking in every direction save that in which she would have encountered Elliott; and whispering a word or two into her father's ear, quitted the room. Elliott's



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heart was beating quickly when the harsh tones of Mr Hillary, who had worked himself into a very violent humour, fell upon his ear, directing him to return immediately to the City, and say he had no answer to send till the morning, when he was to be in attendance at an early hour.

Scarcely knowing whether he stood on his head or his heels, Elliott hurriedly bowed, and withdrew. Borne along on the current of his tumultuous emotions, he seemed to fly down the swarming City Road; and when he reached the dull dingy little back counting-house where he was to be occupied till a late hour of the night, he found himself not in the fittest humour in the world for his task. *Could* he possibly be mistaken in interpreting Miss Hillary's look? Was it not corroborated by her subsequent conduct? And, by the way, now that he came to glance backwards into the two or three months during which he had been almost daily in her presence, divers little incidents started up into his recollection, all tending the same way. "Heigh-ho!" exclaimed Elliott, laying down his yet unused pen, after a long and bewildering reverie, "I wonder what Miss Hillary is thinking about! Surely I have had a kind of day-dream! It *can't* have really happened! And yet, how could there have been a mistake? Heaven knows, I had taken nothing to excite or disorder me—except, perhaps, my long walk! Here's a *coup de soleil* by the way, with a witness! but only to think of it—Miss Hillary, daughter of Jacob Hillary, Esq.—in love with—an under-clerk of her father—poh! it will never do! I'll think of it tomorrow morning." Thus communed Elliott with himself, by turns writing, pausing, and soliloquising, till the lateness of the hour compelled him to apply to his task in good earnest. He did not quit his desk till it had struck ten; from which period till that at which he tumbled into his little bed, he fancied that scarcely five minutes had elapsed.

He made his appearance at Bullion House the next morning with a sad fluttering about the heart, but it soon subsided, for Miss Hillary was not present to prolong his agitation. He had not been seated for many minutes, however, before he observed her in a distant part of the gardens, apparently tending some flowers. As his eye followed the movements of her graceful figure, he could not avoid a faint sigh of regret at his own absurdity in raising such a superstructure of splendid possibilities upon so slight a foundation. His attention was at that instant arrested by Mr Hillary's multifarious commands for the City: and, in short, Miss Hillary's absence from town for about a week, added to a great increase of business at the counting-house, owing to an extensive failure of a foreign correspondent, gradually restored Elliott to his senses, and banished the intrusive image of his lovely tormentor. Her unequivocal exhibition of feeling, however—unequivocal at least *to him*—on the occasion of the next meeting, instantly revived all his former excitement, and plunged him afresh into the soft tumult of doubts, hopes, and fears, from which he had so lately emerged. Every day that he returned to Mr Hillary's, brought him fresh evidence of the extent to which he had encroached upon Miss Hillary's affections; and strange indeed must be that heart which, feeling itself alone and despised in the world, can suddenly find itself the object of a most enthusiastic and disinterested attachment, without kindling into a flame of grateful affection. Was there anything wonderful or improbable in the conduct here attributed to Miss Hillary? No. A girl of frank and generous feeling, she saw in one whom undeserved misfortune had placed in a very painful and trying position, the constant exhibition of the best qualities of human nature; a patient and dignified submission to her father's cruel and oppressive treatment—a submission, perhaps, *on her account;* she beheld his high feeling conquering misfortune; she saw in his eye—his every look—his whole demeanour, susceptibilities of a higher description than befitted such a situa-

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tion as his present one:—and beyond all this—last, though not least, as Elliott acted the gentleman, so he *looked* it—and a gentleman not particularly plain or unprepossessing either.

So it came to pass, then, that these two hearts became acquainted with each other, despite the obstacles of circumstance and situation. A kind of telegraphing courtship was carried on between them daily, which must have been observed by Mr Hillary, but for the engrossing interest with which he regarded the communications of which Elliott was always the bearer. Mr Hillary began, however, at length to recover the use of his limbs, and rapidly to gain general strength. He consequently announced one morning to Elliott—his sentence of banishment from Paradise—that he should not require him to call after the morrow. At this time the lovers had never interchanged a syllable together, either verbal or written, that could savour of love; and yet each was as confident of the state of the other's feelings, as though a hundred closely-written, and closer-crossed letters had been passing between them. On the dreaded morrow he was pale, and somewhat confused: nor was she far otherwise—but she had sufficient means of accounting for it, if required to do so, in the indisposition of her mother, who had for many months been a bed-ridden invalid. As for Elliott, he was safe. He might have appeared at death's door, without attracting the notice, or exciting the inquiries of his callous employer. As he rose to leave the room, Elliott bowed to Mr Hillary—but his last glance was directed towards Miss Hillary—who, however, at that moment, was, or appeared to be, too busily occupied with pouring out her exemplary father's coffee, to pay any attention to her retiring lover, who consequently quitted her presence not a little piqued and alarmed.

They had no opportunity of seeing one another till nearly a month after the occasion just alluded to; when they met under circumstances very favourable for the expression of such feelings as either of them dared to acknowledge—and the opportunity was not thrown away. Mr Hillary had quitted town for the north, on urgent business, which was expected to detain him for nearly a fortnight; and Elliott failed not, on the following Sunday, to be at the post he had constantly occupied for some months—namely, a seat in the gallery of the church attended by Mr Hillary and his family, commanding a distant view of the great central pew—matted, hassocked, and velvet-cushioned with a rich array of splendid implements of devotion, in the shape of bibles and prayer-books, great and small, with gilt edges, and in blue and red morocco—being the favoured spot occupied by the great merchant, where he was pleased, by his presence, to assure the admiring vicar of his respect for him—and the established Church. Miss Hillary had long since been aware of the presence of her timid and distant lover on these occasions; they had several times nearly jostled against one another in going out of church, the consequence of which was generally a civil though silent recognition of him. And this might be done with impunity, seeing how her magnificent father was occupied with nodding to everybody, genteel enough to be so publicly recognised, and shaking hands with the select few who enjoyed the distinction of his personal acquaintance. With what a different air and with what a different feeling did the great merchant and his humble clerk pass on these occasions down the aisle!—but to return. On the Sunday above alluded to, Elliott, with a fluttering heart, beheld Miss Hillary enter the church alone, and become the solitary tenant of the family pew. Sad truants from his prayer-book, his eyes never quitted its fair and solitary occupant. But she chose, in some wayward humour, to sit that morning with her back turned towards the part of the church where she must have known Elliott to be, and never once looked up in that direction. They met, however, after the service, near the door, as usual; she dropped her black veil just in time to prevent his observing a certain sud-

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den flush that forced itself upon her features; returned his modest bow; a few words, of course, were interchanged; it threatened—or Elliott chose to represent that it threatened, to rain, (which he heartily wished it would, as she had come on foot, and unattended;) and so, in short, it came to pass that this very discreet couple were to be seen absolutely walking arm-in-arm towards Bullion House, at the slowest possible pace, and by the most circuitous route that could suggest itself to the flurried mind of Elliott. An instinctive sense of propriety, or rather prudence, led him to quit her arm just before arriving at that turn of the road which brought them full in sight of her father's house. There they parted—each satisfied as to the nature of the other's feelings, though, however, nothing had then passed between them of an explicit or decisive character.

It is not necessary for me to dwell on this part of their history. Where there is a will, it is said, there is a way; and the young and venturous couple found, before long, an opportunity of declaring to each other their mutual feelings. Their meetings and correspondence were contrived and carried on with the utmost difficulty. Great caution and secresy were necessary to conceal the affair from Mr Hillary, and those whose interest it was to give him early information on every matter that in any way concerned him. Miss Hillary buoyed herself up with the hope of securing, in due time, her mother, and obtaining her intercessions with her stern and callous-hearted father.

Some three months or thereabouts, after the Sunday just mentioned, Mr Hillary returned from the City, and made his appearance at dinner, in an unusually brisk and lively humour. Miss Hillary was at a loss to conjecture the occasion of such an exhibition; but imagined it must be some great speculation of his which had proved eminently successful. He occasionally directed towards her a kind of grim leer, as though longing to communicate tidings which he expected to be as gratifying to her as they were to himself. They dined alone; and as she was retiring rather earlier than usual, in order to attend upon her mother, who had that day been more than ordinarily indisposed, he motioned her to resume her seat.

"Well, Molly"—for that was the elegant version of her Christian name which he generally adopted when in a good humour—"Well, Molly," pouring out a glass of wine, as the servants made their final exit, "I have heard something to-day, in the City—a-hem! in which *you* are particularly concerned—very much so—and—so—a-hem! am I!" He tossed off half of his glass, and smacked his lips, as though he unusually relished the flavour.

"Indeed! papa," exclaimed the young lady, with an air of anxious vivacity, not attempting to convey to her lips the brimming wine-glass her father had filled for her, lest the trembling of her hand should be observed by him—"Oh, you are joking! what can I have to do with the City, papa?"

"Do? Aha, my girl! 'What can you have to do with the City,'" good-humouredly attempting to imitate her tone—"Indeed? Aha, miss! Don't try to play mock-modest with *me!* You know as well as I do what I'm going to say!" he added, looking at her archly, as *he* fancied, but so as to blanch her cheek and agitate her whole frame with an irresistible tremor. Her acute and feeling father observed her emotion. "There—now, that's just the way all you young misses behave on these occasions! I suppose it's considered mighty pretty! As if it wasn't all a matter of course for a young woman to hear about a young husband!"

"Papa—how you *do* love a joke!" replied Miss Hillary with a sickly smile, making a desperate effort to carry her wine-glass to her lips, in which she succeeded, swallowing every drop that was in it, while her father electrified her by proceeding—"It's no use mincing matters—the thing is gone too far."

"Gone too far!" echoed Miss Hillary mechanically.

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"Yes—gone too far, I say, and I stick to it. A bargain's a bargain all the world over, whatever it's about; and a bargain I've struck to-day. You're my daughter—my only daughter, d'ye see—and I've been a good while on the look-out for a proper person to marry you to—and, egad! to-day I've got him—my future son-in-law, d'ye hear, and one that will clap a coronet on my Molly's pretty head—and on the day he does so, I do two things; I give you a plum—and myself cut Mincing Lane, and sink the shop for the rest of my days. There's nuts for you to crack! Aha, Molly—what d'ye say to all this? A'n't it news?"

"*Say!* why—I—I—I"—stammered the young lady, her face nearly as white as the handkerchief on which her eyes were violently fixed, and with which her fingers were hurriedly playing.

"Why—Molly! What's the matter? What the ——— a-hem!—are you gone so pale for! Gad—I see how it is—I've been too abrupt, as your poor mother has it! But the thing *is* as I said, that's flat, come what will—say it how one will, take it how you will! So make up your mind, Molly, like a good girl as you are—come, kiss me! I never loved you so much as I do now I'm going to lose you!"

She made no attempt to rise from her chair, so he got up from his own and approached her.

"Adad—but what's the matter here? Your little hands are as cold as a corpse's. Why, Molly!—what—what nonsense!" He chucked her under the chin.—"You're trying to frighten me, Molly—I know you are! Ah-ha!" He grew more and more alarmed at her deadly paleness and apparent insensibility to what he was saying. "Well, now,"——he paused, and looked anxiously at her. "Who would have thought," he added suddenly, "that it would have taken the girl a-back so? Come, come!"—slapping her smartly on her back,—"a joke's a joke, and I've had mine, but it's been carried too far, I'm afraid"——

"Dear—dearest papa," gasped his daughter, suddenly raising her eyes, and fixing them with a steadfast brightening look upon his, at the same time catching hold of his hands convulsively—"So it is—*a joke!* a—joke—it is"—— and gradually sinking back in her chair, to her father's unspeakable alarm, she swooned. Holding her in his arms, he roared stoutly for assistance, and in a twinkling a posse of servants, male and female, obeying the summons, rushed pell-mell into the dining-room: the ordinary hubbub attendant on a fainting fit ensued; cold water sprinkled—eau-de-Cologne—volatile salts, &c. &c. Then the young lady, scarce restored to her senses, was supported, or rather carried, by her maid to her own apartment, and Mr Hillary was left to himself for the remainder of the evening, flustered and confounded beyond all expression. The result of his troubled ruminations was, that the sudden communication of such prodigious good fortune had upset his daughter with joy; and that he must return to the charge in a day or two, and break it to her more easily. The real fact was, that he had that day assured the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Scamp of his daughter's heart, hand, and fortune; and that exemplary personage had agreed to dine at Bullion House on the ensuing Sunday, for the purpose of being introduced to his future Viscountess, whose noble fortune was to place his financial matters upon an entirely new basis—at least for some time to come, and enable him to show his honest face once more in divers amiable coteries at C——'s and elsewhere. Old Hillary's dazzled eyes could see nothing but his lordship's coronet; and he had no more doubt about his right thus to dispose of his daughter's heart, than he had about his right to draw upon Messrs Cash, Credit, and Co., his bankers, without first consulting them to ascertain whether they would honour his drafts.

Miss Hillary did not make her appearance the next morning at her father's breakfast-table, her maid being sent to say that her young lady had a violent headach, and so forth; the consequence

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of which was, that the old gentleman departed for the City in a terrible temper, as every member of his establishment could have testified if they had been asked. Miss Hillary had spent an hour or two of the preceding midnight in writing to Elliott a long and somewhat incoherent detail of what had happened. She gave but a poor account of herself to her father at dinner that day. He was morosely silent; she pale, absent, disconcerted.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Mary?" inquired Mr Hillary with stern abruptness, as soon as the servants had withdrawn—"What were all those tantrums of yours about last night, eh?"

"Indeed, papa," replied his trembling daughter, "I hardly know—but really—you must remember, you said such *very* odd things, and so suddenly, and you looked so angry"——

"Tut, girl, poh!—Fiddle faddle!" exclaimed her father, gulping down a glass of wine with great energy. "I could almost—a-hem!—really it looked as if you had taken a little too much, eh? What harm was there in me telling you that you were going soon to be married? What's a girl born and bred up for but to be married?—Eh, Mary?" continued her father, determined, this time, to go to work with greater skill and tact than on the preceding evening. "I want an answer, Mary!"

"Why, papa, it *was* a very odd thing now, was not it?" said his daughter with an affectionate smile, drawing nearer to her father, her knees trembling, however, the while; "and I know you did it only to try whether I was a silly vain girl? Why should I want to be married, papa, when you and my poor mamma are so kind to me?"

"Humph!" grunted her father, gulping down a great glass of claret. "And d'ye think we're to live for ever? I must see you established before long, for my health, hem! hem! is none of the strongest," (he had scarcely ever known what an hour's illness was in his life, except his late accident, from which he had completely recovered;) "and as for your poor mother, you know"—a long pause ensued here. "Now, suppose," continued the wily tactician, "suppose, Molly," looking at her very anxiously—"suppose I *wasn't* in a joke last night, after all?"

"Well, papa"——

"*Well, papa!*" echoed her father, sneeringly and snappishly, unable to conceal his ill-humour; "but it isn't '*well papa;*' I can't understand all this nonsense. Mary, you must not give yourself airs!—Did you ever happen to hear—a-hem!" He suddenly stopped short, sipped his wine, and paused, evidently intending to make some important communication; and striving, at the same time, to assume an unconcerned air—"Did you ever hear of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Scamp, Molly?"

"Lord Scamp, papa?—Oh, yes—I've seen things about him, now and then, in the newspapers. Isn't he a great gambler, papa?" inquired Miss Hillary, looking at her father calmly.

"No—it's a lie, it's a d——d lie!" replied her father furiously, whirling about the numerous seals of his watch. "Has any one been putting it into your head to say such stuff?"

"No one, indeed, papa, only the newspapers"——

"And are you such an idiot as to believe newspapers? Didn't they say, a year or two ago, that my house was in for £20,000, when Gumarabic and Co. broke? And wasn't *that* a great lie! I didn't lose a fiftieth of the sum! No," he added, after a long pause, "Lord Scamp is no such thing. He's a vastly agreeable young man, and takes an uncommon interest in City matters, and that's saying no small things for a nobleman of his high rank. Why, it's said he may one day be a duke!"

"Indeed, papa! And do you know him?"

"Y—y—es!—Know him? Of course! —Hem!—Do you think I come and talk up at Highbury about everybody I know? Know Lord Scamp!—He's an ornament to the peerage."

"How long have you known him, papa?"

"How long, puss?—Why this—a

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good while! However, as he dines here on Sunday"——

"Dines here on Sunday!—Lord Scamp dines here next Sunday? Oh, papa! this is surely another joke of yours!"

"Curse me, then, if I can see it!—What the deuce is there so odd in my asking a nobleman to dinner, if I think proper? Why, if it comes to that, I can buy up a dozen of them any day, if I choose;" and he thrust his hands deeply into his breeches' pockets.

"Yes, dear papa, I know you could—if they were worth buying," replied Miss Hillary, with a faint smile. Give *me* a great merchant before a hundred good-for-nothing lords!" and she rose, put her hands about his neck, and kissed him affectionately.

"Well—I—I—don't think you're so vastly far off the mark *there*, at any rate, Polly," said her father, with a subdued air of exultation; adding in a lower tone, and a mollified manner, "but at the same time, you know there *may* be lords as good as any merchant in the city of London—hem! and, after all—a lord's a superior article, too, in respect of birth and breeding."

"Yes, papa, they're all well enough I dare say, in their own circles: but in their hearts, depend upon it, they only despise us poor citizens."

"*Us poor citizens*—I like that!" drawled her father, pouring out his wine slowly with a magnificent air, and drinking it off in silence. "You shall see, however, on Sunday, Poll! whether you're correct"——

"What! am *I* to dine with you!" inquired Miss Hillary, with irrepressible alarm.

"You to dine with us?" interrupted her father, in his former angry tone. "Of course you will! Why the devil should not you?"

"My poor mamma"——

"Oh—a-hem! I mean—nonsense—you can go to her after dinner. Certainly—I suppose you *must* attend to her!"

"Very well, papa—I will obey you—whatever you like," replied Miss Hillary, a sudden tremor running from head to foot.

"That's a dear good girl—that's my own Poll! And, hearken," he added, with a mixture of good-humour and anxiety, "make yourself look handsome——never mind the cost—money's no object, you know! So tell that pert minx, your maid Joliffe, that I expect she'll turn you out first-rate that day—if it's only to save the credit of *us—poor—merchants!*—ha, ha, ha!"

"Gracious! papa—but why are you really so anxious about my dressing so well?"

Her father, who had sat swallowing glass after glass with unusual rapidity, at the same time unconsciously mixing his wines, as he carried on this exciting dialogue, put his finger to the side of his nose, and winked in a particularly knowing manner. His daughter saw her advantage in an instant; and, with the ready tact of her sex, resolved at once to find out all that was in her father's heart concerning her. She smiled as cheerfully as she could, and affected to enter readily into all his feelings. She poured him out one or two glasses more of his favourite wine, and chattered as fast as himself, till she at length succeeded in extracting from him the frightful avowal, that he had distinctly promised her to Lord Scamp, whose visit, on the ensuing Sunday, would be paid to her as to his future wife. Soon after this she rung for candles; and hastily kissing her father, who had fairly fallen asleep, she withdrew to her own room, and there spent the next hour or two in confidential converse with her maid Joliffe.

Sunday came, and, true enough, with it Lord Scamp—a handsome, heartless coxcomb, whose cool, easy assurance, and *business-like* attentions to Miss Hillary, excited in her a disgust she could scarcely conceal. In vain was her father's eager and anxious eye fixed upon her; she maintained an air of uniform indifference; listened almost in silence—the silence of contempt—to all the lisping twaddle uttered by her would-be lover, and so well acted, in short, the part she had determined upon, that his lordship, as he drove home, felt somewhat discon-

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certed at being thus foiled for—as he imagined—the first time in his life; and her father, after obsequiously attending his lordship to his cab, summoned his trembling daughter back from her mother's apartment into the drawing-room, and assailed her with a fury she had never known him exhibit—at least towards any member of his family. From that day might be dated the commencement of a kind of domestic reign of terror, at the hitherto quiet and happy Bullion House. The one great aim of her father concerning his daughter and his fortune had been—or rather seemed on the point of being—frustrated by that daughter. But he was not lightly to be turned from his purpose. He redoubled his civilities to Lord Scamp, who kept up his visits with a systematic punctuality, despite the contemptuous and disgustful air with which the young lady constantly received him. The right honourable roué was playing, indeed, for too deep a stake—an accomplished and elegant girl, with a hundred thousand pounds down, and nearly double that sum, he understood, at her father's death—to admit of his throwing up the game, while the possibility of a chance remained. Half the poor girl's fortune was already transferred, in Lord Scamp's mind, to the pockets of half-a-dozen harpies at the turf and the table; so he was, as before observed, very punctual in his engagements at Bullion House, with patient politeness continuing to pay the most flattering attentions to Miss Hillary—and her father. The latter was kept in a state of constant fever. Conscious of the transparent contempt exhibited by his daughter towards her noble suitor, he could at length hardly look his lordship in the face, as, day after day, he obsequiously assured him that "there wasn't anything in it"—and that, for all his daughter's nonsense, he already "felt himself a lord's father-in-law!" Miss Hillary's life was becoming intolerable, subjected as she was to such systematic persecution, from which, at length, the sick chamber of her mother scarce afforded her a momentary sanctuary. A thousand times she formed the desperate determination to confess all to her father, and risk the fearful consequences; for such she dreaded they would be, knowing well her father's disposition, and the terrible frustration of his favourite and long-laid schemes which was taking place. Such constant anxiety and agitation, added to confinement in her mother's bed-chamber, sensibly affected her health; and at the suggestion of Elliott, with whom she contrived to keep up a frequent correspondence, she had at length determined upon opening the fearful communication to her father, and so being at all events delivered from the intolerable presence and attentions of Lord Scamp.

By what means it came to pass, neither she nor Elliott was ever able to discover; but on the morning of the day she had fixed for her desperate *dénouement*, Mr Hillary, during the temporary absence of his daughter, returned from the City about two o'clock, most unexpectedly, his manner disturbed, his countenance pale and troubled. Accompanied by his solicitor, he made his way at once to his daughter's apartment, with his own hand seized her desk and carried it down to the drawing-room, and forced it open. Frantic with fury, he was listening to one of Elliott's fondest letters to his daughter being read by his solicitor, as she unconsciously entered the drawing-room, in walking attire. It would be in vain to attempt describing the scene that immediately ensued. Old Hillary's lips moved, but his utterance was choked by the tremendous rage which possessed him, and forced him almost to the verge of madness. Trembling from head to foot, and his straining eyes apparently starting from their sockets, he pointed in silence to a little heap of opened letters lying on the table, on which stood also her desk. She perceived that all was discovered, and with a faint cry fell senseless upon the floor. There, as far as her father was concerned, she might have continued; but his companion sprang to the bell, lifted her insensible form from the.

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floor, and gave her to the entering servants, who instantly bore her to her own room. Mr Jeffreys the solicitor, a highly respectable man—to whom Mr Hillary had hurried the instant that he recovered from the first shock occasioned by discovering his daughter's secret—vehemently expostulated with his client on hearing the violent and vindictive measures he threatened to adopt towards his daughter and Elliott; for the tone of the correspondence which then lay before him, had satisfied him of the fatal extent to which his daughter's affections were engaged.

*Now* her treatment of Lord Scamp was accounted for! Her dreadful agitation on first hearing his intentions concerning that young nobleman and herself was explained! So, here was his fondest hope blighted—the sole ambition of his life defeated,—and by one of his own—his inferior servants—an outer clerk on his establishment at Mincing Lane! Confounded by a retrospect into the last few months, "Where have been my eyes—my common sense?"—he groaned—"the devil himself has done it all, and made me assist in it! Oh! I see! I remember! Those cursed days when he came up from the City to me—and when—I must always have *her* with me! There the mischief was begun—oh, it's clear as the daylight! *I've* done it! *I've* done it all! And now—by ——! I'll undo it all!" Mr Jeffreys at length succeeded in subduing the extreme excitement of his client, and bringing him to converse a little more calmly on the painful and embarrassing discovery that had been made. Innumerable were the conjectures as to the means by which this secret acquaintance and correspondence had been commenced and carried on. Every servant in the house was examined—but in vain. Even Joliffe, his daughter's maid, came at length, however strongly suspected, still undiscovered, out of the fierce and searching scrutiny. Poor Mrs Hillary's precarious situation even did not exempt her from the long and angry inquiries of her exasperated husband. She had really, however, been entirely unacquainted with the affair.

The next morning, Elliott was summoned from the City to Bullion House, whither he repaired accordingly about twelve o'clock, little imagining the occasion of his summons; for Miss Hillary had not communicated to him the intention she had formed of breaking the matter to her father, nor had she had any opportunity of telling him of the alarming discovery that had taken place. He perceived, nevertheless, certain symptoms of disturbance in the ominous looks of the porter who opened the hall-door, and the servant who conducted him to the drawing-room, where he found Mr Hillary and another gentleman—Mr Jeffreys—seated together at a table covered with papers—both of them obviously agitated.

"So, sir," commenced Mr Hillary, fixing his furious eye upon Elliott as he entered, "your villany's found out—deep as you are?"

"Villany, sir?" echoed Elliott indignantly, but turning very pale.

"Yes, sir—villany! villany! d—— villany! ay—it's all found out! Ah—ah—you cursed scoundrel!" exclaimed Mr Hillary, with quivering lips, and shaking his fist at Elliott.

"For God's sake, Mr Hillary, be calm!" whispered Mr Jeffreys, and then addressed Elliott with a quiet severity—"Of course, Mr Elliott, you are aware of the occasion of this dreadful agitation on the part of Mr Hillary?" Elliott bowed, with a stern inquisitive air, but did not open his lips.

"You beggarly brute—you filthy d——d upstart—you—you"—stammered Mr Hillary, with uncontrollable fury, "your father was a scoundrel before you, sir—he cut his throat, sir"——

Elliott's face whitened in an instant, his expanding eye settled upon Mr Hillary, and his chest heaved with mighty emotion. It was happy for the old man that Elliott at length recollected in him—*the father of Mary Hillary*. He turned his eye for an instant towards Mr Jeffreys, who was looking at him with an imploring, compassion-

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ate expression: Elliott saw and felt that he was thunderstruck at the barbarity of his client. Elliott's eye remained fixed upon Mr Jeffreys for nearly a minute, and then filled with tears. Mr Jeffreys muttered a few words earnestly in the ear of Mr Hillary, who seemed also a little staggered at the extent of his last sally.

"Will you take a seat, Mr Elliott?" said Mr Jeffreys mildly. Elliott bowed, but remained standing, his hat grasped by his left hand with convulsive force. "You will make allowance, sir," continued Mr Jeffreys, "for the dreadful agitation of Mr Hillary, and reflect that your own conduct has occasioned it."

"So you dare to think of marrying my daughter, eh?" thundered Mr Hillary, as if about to rise from his chair. "By ——, but I'll spoil your sport though—I'll be even with you!" gasped the old man, and sunk back panting in his seat.,

"You cannot really be in earnest, sir," resumed Mr Jeffreys, in the same calm and severe tone and manner in which he had spoken from the first—"in thinking yourself entitled to form an attachment and alliance to Miss Hillary?"

"Why am I asked these questions, sir, and in this most extraordinary manner?" inquired Elliott firmly, "have I ever said one single syllable" ——

"Oh, spare your denials, Mr Elliott," said Mr Jeffreys, pointing with a bitter smile to the letters lying open on the table at which he sat; "these letters of yours express your feelings and intentions pretty plainly. Believe me, sir, everything is known!"

"Well, sir, and what then?"—inquired Elliott haughtily: "those letters, I presume, are mine, addressed to Miss Hillary?" Mr Jeffreys bowed contemptuously and indignantly. "Well then, sir, I now avow the feelings those letters express. I have formed, however unworthy myself, a fervent attachment to Miss Hillary, and I will die before I disavow it."

"There! hear him! hark to the fellow! I shall go mad—I shall!" almost roared Mr Hillary, springing out of his chair, and walking to and fro, between it and that occupied by Mr Jeffreys, with hurried steps and vehement gesticulations. "He owns it! He does! The——" and he uttered a perfect volley of execrations. Elliott submitted to them in silence Mr Jeffreys again whispered energetically into the ear of his client, who resumed his seat, but with his eyes fixed on Elliott, and muttering vehemently to himself.

"You see, sir, the wretchedness that your most unwarrantable—your artful—nay, your wicked and presumptuous conduct has brought upon this family. I earnestly hope that it is not too late for you to listen to reason—to abandon your insane projects." He paused, and Elliott bowed. "It is in vain," continued Mr Jeffreys, pointing to the letters, "to conceal our fears that your attentions must have proved but too acceptable to Miss Hillary—but we give you credit for more honour, more good sense, than will admit of your carrying further this most unfortunate affair, of your persisting in such a wild—I must speak plainly—such an audacious attachment, one that is utterly unsuitable to your means, your prospects, your station, your birth, your education"——

"You will be pleased, sir, to drop the last two words," interrupted Elliott sternly.

"Why, you fellow! why, you're *my clerk!* I pay you wages!—You're a hired servant of mine!" exclaimed Mr Hillary with infinite contempt.

"Well, sir," continued Mr Jeffreys, "this affair is too important to allow of our quarrelling about words. Common sense must tell you that under no possible view of the case can you be a suitable match for Miss Hillary; and therefore common honesty enjoins the course you ought to pursue. However, sir," he added, in a sharper tone, evidently piqued at the composure and firmness maintained by Elliott, "the long and short of it is, that this affair will not be allowed to go further, sir. Mr Hillary is resolved to prevent it—come what will."

"Ay, so help me God!" ejaculated

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Mr Hillary, casting a ferocious glance at Elliott.

"Well, sir," said Elliott with a sigh, "what would you have me do?—Pray, proceed, sir."

"Immediately renounce all pretensions," replied Mr Jeffreys eagerly, "to Miss Hillary—return her letters—pledge yourself to discontinue your attempts to gain her affections, and I am authorised to offer a foreign situation connected with the house you at present serve, and to guarantee you a fixed income of £500 a-year."

"Ay!—Hark'ee, Elliott, I'll do all this, so help me God!" suddenly interrupted Mr Hillary, casting a look of imploring agony at Elliott, who bowed respectfully, but made no reply.

"Suppose, sir," continued Mr Jeffreys, with an anxious and disappointed air,—"suppose, sir, for a moment, that Miss Hillary were to entertain equally ardent feelings towards you, with those which, in these letters, you have expressed to her—can you, as a man of honour—of delicacy—of spirit—persevere with your addresses, where the inevitable consequence of success on your part must be her degradation from the sphere in which she has hitherto moved—her condemnation to straitened circumstances—perhaps to absolute want—for life!—For, believe me, sir, if you suppose that Mr Hillary's fortune is to supply you both with the means of defying him—to support you in a life, on her part of frightful ingratitude and disobedience, and on yours of presumption and selfishness—you will find yourself fearfully mistaken!"

"He's speaking the truth—by —— he is!" said Mr Hillary, striving to assume a calm manner. "If you *do* come together after all this, d——n me if I dont leave every penny I have in the world to an hospital—or to a jail—in which one or both of you may perhaps end your days, after all!"

"Possibly, Mr Elliott," resumed Mr Jeffreys, "I am to infer from your silence that you doubt—that you disbelieve these threats. If so, I assure you, you are grievously and fatally mistaken; you do not, believe me, know Mr Hillary as I know him, and have known him this twenty years and upwards. I solemnly and truly assure you that I believe he will as certainly do what he says, and for ever forsake you both, as you are standing now before us!"—He paused. "Again, sir, you may imagine that Miss Hillary has property of her own—at her own disposal. Do not so sadly deceive yourself on that score! Miss Hillary has, at this moment, exactly £600 at her own disposal"——

"Ay—only £600—that's the uttermost penny"——

"And how long is that to last?—come, sir—allow me to ask you what you have to say to all this?" inquired Mr Jeffreys, folding his arms, and leaning back in his chair, with an air of mingled chagrin and exhaustion. Elliott drew a long breath.

"I have but little to say, Mr Jeffreys, in answer to what you have been stating," he commenced, with a melancholy but determined air. "However you may suspect me, and misconstrue and misrepresent my character and motives, I never in my life meditated a dishonourable action." He paused, thinking Mr Hillary was about to interrupt him, but he was mistaken. Mr Hillary was silently devouring every word that fell from Elliott, as also was Mr Jeffreys. "I am here as *a hired servant*, indeed," resumed Elliott, with a sigh,—"and I am the son of one who—who—was an unfortunate"—his eyes filled, and his voice faltered. For some seconds there was a dead silence. The perspiration stood on every feature of Mr Hillary's agitated countenance. "But of course all this is as nothing here." He gathered courage, and proceeded with a calm and resolute air. "I know how hateful I must now appear to you. I *do* deserve bitter reproof—and surely I have had it, for my presumption in aspiring to the hand and heart of Miss Hillary. I tried long to resist the passion that devoured me, but in vain. Miss Hillary knew my destitute situation; she had many opportunities of ascertaining my character—she conceived

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a noble affection for me—I returned her love; I was obliged to do it secretly — and, as far as that goes, I submit to any censure—I feel, I know that I have done wrong! If Miss Hillary choose to withdraw her affection from me, I will submit, though my heart should break. If, on the contrary, she continue to love me," his eye brightened—"I am not cowardly or base enough to undervalue her love." Here Mr Hillary struggled with Mr Jeffreys, who, however, succeeded in restraining his client. "If Miss Hillary condescends to become my wife"——

"Oh Lord! Oh Lord! Oh Lord!" groaned Mr Hillary, clasping his hands upon his forehead—"open the windows, Mr Jeffreys—or I shall be smothered—I am dying—I shall go mad"——

"I will retire, sir," said Elliott, addressing Mr Jeffreys, who was opening the nearest window.

"No, but you shan't, though" — gasped Mr Hillary — "you shall stop here"—he panted for breath—"Hark'ee, sir—d'ye hear, Elliott—listen"—he could not recover his breath. Mr Jeffreys implored him to take time —to be cool — "Yes — now I'm cool enough — I've — taken time—to consider—I have! Hark'ee, sir—if you dare to think—of having—my daughter —and if she—is such a cursed fool—as to think of having—you"—he stopped for a few seconds for want of breath —"why — look'ee sir — so help me God—you may both—both of you—and your children—if you have any —die in the streets—like dogs—I've done with you—both of you—not a farthing — not a morsel of bread; —— me if I do!" Here he breathed like a hard-run horse. "Now, sir, like a thief as you are!—go on courting—my daughter—marry her! ruin her!—Go, and believe that all I'm saying is—a lie!—go, and hope that, by and by, I'll forgive you—and all that — try it, sir! Marry, and see whether I give in!—I'll teach you—to rob an old man — of his child! The instant you leave this house, sir —this gentleman—makes my will—he does!—and when I'm dead—you may both of you — go to Doctors' Commons—borrow a shilling, if you can—and see if your names—or your children's—are in it, ha, ha, ha!" he concluded with a bitter and ghastly laugh, snapping his shaking fingers at Elliott—"Get away, sir — marry after this, if you dare!"——

Elliott almost reeled out of the room, and out of the house, and did not fully recollect himself till the groom of his aristocratic competitor, Lord Scamp, whose cab was dashing up to the gates of Bullion House, shouted to him to get out of the way, or be driven over!

Elliott returned to his desk, at Mincing Lane, too much agitated and confused, however, to be able to attend to business. He therefore obtained a reluctant permission to absent himself till the morrow. Even the interval thus afforded, however, he was quite incapable of spending in the reflection required by the very serious situation in which he had been so suddenly placed. He could not bring his mind to bear steadily upon any distinct point of his dreadful interview with Mr Hillary and Mr Jeffreys; and at length, lost and bewildered in a maze of indefinite conjecture—of doubtful hopes and fears, he retired early to bed. There, after tossing about for several hours, he at length dropped asleep—and awoke at an early hour somewhat refreshed and calmed.——Well, then, what was to be done?

He felt a conviction that Mr Hillary would be an uncompromising—an inexorable opponent of their marriage, however long they might postpone it with the hope of wearing out or softening away his repugnance to it; and that, if they married in defiance of him, he would fulfil every threat he had uttered. Of these two points he felt as certain as of his existence.

He believed Miss Hillary's attachment to him to be ardent and unalterable; and that nothing short of main force would prevent her from adopting any suggestion he might offer. As for himself, he was passionately—and his heart loudly told

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him *disinterestedly* attached to her; he could, therefore, as far as he himself was concerned, cheerfully bid adieu to all hopes of enjoying a shilling of her father's wealth, and be joyfully content to labour for their daily bread. But—a fearful array of contingencies here presented themselves before him. Suppose they married, they would certainly have £600 to commence with; but suppose his health failed him—or from any other cause he should become unable to support himself, a wife—and it might be—a large family, how soon would £600 disappear? And what would be then before them?—His heart shrunk from exposing the generous and confiding creature whose love he had gained, to such terrible dangers. He could—he *would*—write to her, and entreat her to forget him—to obey the reasonable wishes of her father. He felt that Mr Hillary had great and grievous cause for complaint against him; could make every allowance for his feelings, and forgive their coarse and even brutal manifestation—and yet, when he reflected upon *some* expressions he had let fall—upon the withering scorn with which he had been treated—the more he looked at THIS view of the case, the more he felt the spirit of A MAN swelling within him. He never trod so firmly, nor carried himself so erectly, as he did on his way down to the City that morning.

But then, again, what misery was poor Miss Hillary then enduring! What cruel and incessant persecution was being inflicted upon her; but SHE, too, had a high and bold spirit—he kindled as he pursued his meditations—he felt that the consciousness of kindred qualities endeared her to him tenfold more even than before.

Thus he communed with himself; but at length he determined on writing the letter he had proposed, and did so that night.

He was not dismissed, as he had expected, from the service of Mr Hillary, who retained him, at the suggestion of Mr Jeffreys—that shrewd gentleman being aware that he could then keep Elliott's movements more distinctly under his own eye, and have more frequent opportunities of negotiating with him on behalf of Mr Hillary. Elliott's position in the establishment was such as never brought him into personal contact with Mr Hillary; and apparently no one but himself and Mr Hillary were acquainted with the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. As before hinted, Mr Jeffreys was incessant in his efforts, both personally and by letter, to induce Elliott to break off the disastrous connection he had formed; and, from an occasional note which Miss Hillary contrived—despite all the *espionage* to which she was subjected—to smuggle to him, he learned with poignant sorrow, that his apprehensions of the treatment she would receive at the hands of her father were but too well founded. She repelled, with an affectionate and indignant energy, his offers and proposals to break off the affair. She told him that her spirit rose with the cruelty she suffered, and declared herself ready, if he thought fit, to fly from the scene of trouble, and be united to him immediately, and for ever. Many and many a sleepless night did such communications as these insure to Elliott. He saw infinite danger in attempting a clandestine marriage with Miss Hillary, even should she be a readily consenting party. His upright and manly disposition revolted from a measure so underhand, so unworthy; and yet, what other course lay open to them? His own position at the counting-house was becoming very trying and painful. It soon became apparent that, on some account or another, he was an object of almost loathing disregard to the august personage at the head of the establishment; and the natural consequence was, an increasing infliction of petty annoyances and hardships by those connected with him in daily business. He was required to do more than he had ever before been called upon to do, and felt himself the subject of frequent and offensive remark, as well as suspicion. The ill-treatment of his superiors, however, and the imperti-

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nences of his equals and inferiors, he treated with the same patient and resolute contempt, conducting himself with the utmost vigilance and circumspection, and applying to business—however unjustly accumulated upon him—with an energy, perseverance, and good-humour, that only the more mortified his unworthy enemies. Poor Elliott! why did he continue in the service of Hillary, Hungate, and Company? How utterly chimerical was the hope he sometimes entertained, of its being possible that his exemplary conduct could ever make any impression upon the hard heart of Mr Hillary!

Miss Hillary did really, as has been stated, suffer a martyrdom at Bullion House, at the hands of her father. Every day caresses and curses were alternated, and she felt that she was in fact a *prisoner*—her every movement watched, her every look scrutinised. Mr Hillary frequently caused to be conveyed to her reports the most false and degrading concerning Elliott! but they were such transparent fabrications, as of course to defeat the ends proposed. She found some comfort in the society of her mother, who, though for a long time feeling and expressing strong disapprobation of her daughter's attachment to Elliott, at length relented, and even endeavoured to influence Mr Hillary on their daughter's behalf. Her kind offices were, however, suddenly interrupted by a second attack of paralysis, which deprived her of the power of speech and motion. This dreadful shock, occurring at such a moment, was too much for Miss Hillary, who was removed from attending affectionately at the bedside of her unhappy mother, to her own room, where she lay for nearly a fortnight in a violent fever. So far from these domestic trials tending, however, to soften the heart of Mr Hillary, they apparently contributed only to harden it—to aggravate his hatred of Elliott—of him who had done so much to disturb, to destroy his domestic peace, his fondest wishes and expectations.

Lord Scamp continued his interested and flattering attentions to Mr Hillary, with whom he was continually dining, and at length—a proof of the prodigious ascendancy he had acquired over the stupid *millionaire*—succeeded in borrowing from him a very considerable sum of money. Mr Hillary soon apprised his lordship of the real nature of the hinderance to his marriage with Miss Hillary; and his lordship of course felt it his duty, not to speak of his interest, to foster and inflame the fury of his wished-for father-in-law, against his obscure and presumptuous rival. Several schemes were proposed by this worthy couple for the purpose of putting an end to the pretensions and prospects of this "insolent *parvenu* of the outer counting-house," as his lordship styled poor Elliott. An accidental circumstance at length suggested to them a plot so artful and atrocious, that poor Elliott fell a victim to it.

On returning to the counting-house, one day, from the little chop-house at which he had been swallowing a hasty and frugal dinner, he observed indications of some unusual occurrence. No one spoke to him; all seemed to look at him as with suspicion and alarm. He had hardly hung up his hat, and reseated himself at his desk, when a message was brought to him from Mr Hillary, who required his immediate attendance in his private room. Thither, therefore, he repaired, with some surprise—and with more surprise beheld all the partners assembled, together with the head clerk, the solicitor of the firm, and one or two strangers. He had hardly closed the door after himself, when Mr Hillary pointed to him, saying, "This is your prisoner—take him into custody!"

"Surrender, sir—you're our prisoner," said one of the two strangers, both of whom now advanced to him, one laying hold of his collar, the other fumbling in his pocket, and taking out a pair of handcuffs. Elliott staggered several paces from them on hearing the astounding language of Mr Hillary, and but that he was held by the officer who had grasped his collar, seemed likely to have fallen. He turned deadly pale. For a second or two he spoke not.

"Fetch a glass of water," said Mr

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Fleming, one of the partners, observing Elliott's lips losing their colour, and moving without uttering any sound. But he recovered himself from the momentary shock without the aid of the water, which seemed to have been placed in readiness beforehand, so soon was it produced. Pushing aside the officer's hand that raised the glass to his lips, he exclaimed, "What is the meaning of this, sir? How dare you deprive me of my liberty, sir?" addressing Mr Hillary—"What am I charged with?"

"Embezzling the money of your employers," interposed the solicitor. As he spoke, poor Elliott fixed upon him a stare of horror, and after standing and gazing in silence for several moments, attempted to speak, but in vain; and fell in a kind of fit into the arms of the officers. When he had recovered, he was conducted to a hackney coach which had been some time in readiness, and conveyed to the police office; where an hour or two afterwards, Mr Hillary, accompanied by Mr Fleming, the solicitor, and two of Elliott's fellow-clerks, attended to prefer the charge. Elliott was immediately brought to the bar, where he stood very pale, but calm and self-possessed, his eyes fixed upon Mr Hillary with a steadfast searching look, that nothing could have sustained but his indignant consciousness of innocence. He heard the charge preferred against him without uttering a word. The firm had had reason for some time, it was said, to suspect that they were robbed by some member of their establishment; that suspicion fell at length upon the prisoner; that he was purposely directed that day to go unexpectedly to dinner, having been watched during the early part of the morning; that his desk was immediately opened and searched, and three five-pound notes, previously marked (and these produced were so marked), found in his pocket-book, carefully hid under a heap of papers; that he had been several times lately seen with bank-notes in his hand, which he seemed desirous of concealing; that he had been very intimate with one of his fellow-clerks, who was now in Newgate on a charge similar to the present; that the firm had actually been robbed to a considerable amount; that Elliott had only that morning been asked by one of the clerks, then present, to lend him some money, when the prisoner replied that he had not got £5 in the world.—All this, and more, Elliott listened to without uttering a syllable.

"Well, sir," said one of the magistrates, "what have you to say to this very serious charge?"

"Say!—Why, *can* you believe it, sir?" replied Elliott, with a frank air of unaffected incredulity.

"Do *you* deny it, sir?" inquired the magistrate coldly.

"Yes, I do! Peremptorily, indignantly! It is absurd! *I rob my employers?* They know better—that it is impossible!"

"Can you prove that this charge is false?" said the magistrate with a matter-of-fact air. "Can you explain, or deny the facts that have been just sworn to?" Elliott looked at him, as if lost in thought. "Do you hear me, sir?" repeated the magistrate sternly; "at the same time, you are not *bound* to say anything; and I would caution you against criminating yourself." Still Elliott paused. "If you are not prepared, I will remand you for a week, before committing you to prison."

"Commit me to prison, sir!"—repeated Elliott, with at once a perplexed and indignant air,—"Why, I am as innocent as yourself!"

"Then, sir, you will be able easily to account for the £15 found in your desk this morning"——

"Ah, yes—I had forgotten that—I deny the fact!—They could not have been found in my desk—for I have not more than £4 and a few shillings in the world, till my next quarter's salary becomes due."

"But it is *sworn* here—you heard it sworn as well as I did—that the money *was* found there. Here are the witnesses—you may ask them any questions you think proper — but they swore to the fact most distinctly."——

"Then, sir," said Elliott, with a

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start, as if electrified with some sudden thought—"I see it all! Oh, God, I now see it all! It was placed there on purpose! It is a plot laid to ruin me!" He turned round abruptly towards Mr Hillary, and fixing a piercing look upon him, he exclaimed in a low voice, "Oh, old man!" He was on the eve of explaining Mr Hillary's probable motives—but the thought of *his daughter* suddenly sealed his lips. "Sir," said he, presently addressing the magistrate, "I take God to witness that I am innocent of this atrocious charge. I am the victim of a conspiracy. Commit me, sir—commit me at once! I put my trust in God—the father of the fatherless."

The magistrates seemed struck with what he had said, and much more with his manner of saying it. They leaned back, and conferred together for a few minutes. "Our minds are not quite satisfied," said the one who had already spoken, "as to the propriety of immediately committing the prisoner to Newgate. Perhaps additional evidence may be brought forward in a few days. Prisoner, you are remanded for a week."

"I hope, sir," said Mr Hillary, "that he will by that time be able to clear his character—nothing I wish more. It's a painful thing to me and my partners to have to press such a charge as this—but we must protect ourselves from the robbery of servants!" This was said by the speaker to the magistrates; but he did not dare to look at the prisoner, whose piercing, indignant eye he *felt* to be fixed upon him, and to follow his every motion.

That day week Elliott was fully committed to Newgate: and on the next morning, the following paragraph appeared in the newspapers:—

"—— Street. Henry Elliott, a clerk in the house of Hillary, Hungate, and Company, Mincing Lane (who was brought to this office a week ago, charged with embezzling the sum of £15, the money of his employers, and suspected of being an accomplice of the young man who was recently committed to Newgate from this office on a similar charge), was yesterday fully committed for trial. He is, we understand, a young man of respectable connections, and excellent education. From his appearance and demeanour, he would have seemed incapable of committing the very serious offence with which he stands charged. He seemed horror-struck on the charge being first preferred, and asseverated his innocence firmly, and in a very impressive manner, declaring that he was the victim of a conspiracy. In answer to a question of the magistrate, one of his employers stated, that up to the time of preferring this charge, the prisoner had borne an excellent character in the house."

The newspaper containing this paragraph found its way, on the evening of the day on which it appeared, into Miss Hillary's room, through her maid, as she was preparing to undress, and conveyed to her the first intimation of poor Elliott's dreadful situation. The moment that she had read it, she sprung to her feet, pushed aside her maid, who attempted to prevent her quitting her apartment, and with the newspaper in her hand, flew wildly down the stairs, and burst into the dining-room, where her father was sitting alone, in his easy-chair, drawn close to the fire. "Father!" she almost shrieked, springing to within a yard or two of where he was sitting—"Henry Elliott robbed you! Henry Elliott in prison! A common thief!" pointing to the newspaper, with frantic vehemence. "Is it so? And YOU his accuser? Oh, no! no! Never!" she exclaimed, a wild smile gleaming on her pallid countenance, at the same time sweeping to and fro before her astounded father, with swift but stately steps, continuing, as she passed and repassed him—"No, sir! no! no! no! —Oh, for shame! for shame, father! Shame on you! shame! His father dead! His mother dead! No one to feel for him! No one to protect him! No one to love him—but—ME!"—— and accompanying the last few words with a low thrilling hysterical laugh, she fell at full length insensible upon the floor.

Her father sat all this while cower-

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ing in his chair, with his hands partially elevated—feeling as though an angry angel had suddenly flashed upon his guilty privacy; and when his daughter fell, he had not the power to quit his chair and go to her relief for several seconds. A horrible suspicion crossed his mind, that she had lost her reason; and he spent the next hour and a half in a perfect ecstasy of terror. As soon, however, as the apothecary summoned to her assistance had assured him that there were, happily, no grounds for his fears—that she had had a very violent fit of hysterics, but was now recovered, and fallen asleep—he ordered the horses to his carriage, and drove off at top speed to the office of his City solicitor, Mr Newington, to instruct him to procure Elliott's instant discharge. That, of course, was utterly impossible; and Mr Hillary, almost stupefied with terror, heard Mr Newington assure him that the King himself could not accomplish such an object! That Elliott must now remain in prison till the day of trial—about a month or six weeks hence—and then be brought to the bar as a felon; that there were but two courses to be pursued on that day, either not to appear against the prisoner, and forfeit all the recognisances, or to appear in open court, and state that the charge was withdrawn, and that it had been founded entirely on a mistake. That even then, in either case, Elliott, if really innocent (Mr Newington was no party whatever to the fraudulent concoction of the charge, which was confined to Mr Hillary and Lord Scamp), would bring an action at law against Mr Hillary, and obtain, doubtless, very large damages for the disgrace, and danger, and injury, which Mr Hillary's unfounded charge had occasioned him; or—more serious still—he might perhaps *indict* all the parties concerned for a conspiracy.

"But," said Mr Hillary, almost sick with fright at this alarming statement of the liabilities he had incurred, "I would not wait for an action to be brought against me—I would pay him any sum he might recommend, and that, too, instantly on his quitting the prison walls."

"But, pardon me, Mr Hillary—why all this"——

"Oh — something of very great importance has just happened at my house, which—which—gives me quite a different opinion. But I was saying I would pay him instantly"——

"But if the young man be spirited, and conscious of his innocence, and choose to set a high value upon his character, he will insist on clearing it in open court, and dare you to the proof of your charges before the whole world—at least *I* should do so in such a case."

"You *would*, would you, sir!" exclaimed Mr Hillary angrily, the big drops of perspiration standing upon his forehead.

"Certainly — certainly — I should indeed; but let that pass. I really don't see"——continued Mr Newington anxiously.

"D——n him, then!" cried Mr Hillary desperately, after a pause, snapping his fingers, "let him do his worst! He can never find *me* out"——

"Eh? what?" interrupted Newington briskly, "find you out! What *can* you mean, Mr Hillary?"

"Why—a—" stammered Mr Hillary, colouring violently, adding something that neither he himself nor Mr Newington could understand. The latter had his own surmises—somewhat vague, it is true — as to the meaning of Mr Hillary's words—especially coupling them, as he did instantly, with certain expressions he had heard poor Elliott utter at the police-office. He was a prudent man, however, and seeing no particular necessity for pushing his inquiries further, he thought it best to let matters remain as Mr Hillary chose to represent them.

Six weeks did poor Elliott lie immured in the dungeons of Newgate, awaiting his trial—as a felon. What pen shall describe his mental sufferings during that period? Conscious of the most exalted and scrupulous integrity—he who had never design-



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edly wronged a human being, even in thought—whom dire necessity only had placed in circumstances which exposed him to the devilish malice of such a man as Hillary—who stood alone, and, with the exception of one fond heart, friendless in the world—whose livelihood depended on his daily labour, and who had hitherto supported himself with decency, not to say dignity, amidst many grievous discouragements and hardships—this was the man pining amid the guilty gloom of the cells of Newgate, and looking forward each day with shuddering to the hour when he was to be dragged with indignity to the bar, and perhaps found guilty, on perjured evidence, of the shocking offence with which he was charged! And all this was, beyond a doubt, the wicked contrivance of Mr Hillary—the father of his Mary! And was he liable to be *transported*—to quit his country ignominiously and for ever—to be banished with disgust and horror from the memory of her who had once so passionately loved him—as an impostor—a villain—a *felon!* He resolved not to attempt any communication with Miss Hillary, if indeed it were practicable; but to await, with stern resolution, the arrival of the hour that was either to crush him with unmerited, but inevitable infamy and ruin, or expose and signally punish those whose malice and wickedness had sought to effect his destruction. What steps could he take to defend himself? Where were his witnesses? What splendid advocate would rise on his behalf to detect and expose the perjury of those who would enter the witness-box to prove the case of his wealthy prosecutors? Poor soul! Heaven support thee against thy hour of trouble, and then deliver thee!

Miss Hillary's fearful excitement, on the evening when she discovered Elliott's situation, led to a slow fever, which confined her to her bed for nearly a fortnight; and when, at the end of that period, she again appeared in her father's presence, it was only to encounter—despite her wan looks—a repetition of the harsh and cruel treatment she had experienced ever since the day on which he had discovered her reluctance to receive the addresses of Lord Scamp. Day after day did her father *bait* her on behalf of his lordship—with alternate coaxing and cursing: all was in vain—for when Lord Scamp at length made her a formal offer of his precious "hand and heart," she rejected him with a quiet contempt which sent him, full of the irritation of wounded conceit, to pour his sorrows into the inflamed ear of her father.

The name that was written on her heart—that was constantly in her sleeping and waking thoughts, Elliott—she never suffered to escape her lips. Her father frequently mentioned it to her, but she listened in melancholy, oftener indignant silence She felt convinced that there was some foul play, on the part of her father, connected with Elliott's incarceration in Newgate, and could sometimes scarcely conceal, when in his presence, a shudder of apprehension. And was it likely—was it possible—that such a measure towards the unhappy, persecuted Elliott, could have any other effect on the daughter, believing him, as she did, to be pure and unspotted, than to increase and deepen her affection for him—to present his image before her mind's eye, as that of one induring martyrdom on her account, and for her sake?

At length came on the day appointed for Elliott's trial, and it was with no little trepidation that Mr Hillary, accompanied by Lord Scamp, stepped into his carriage, and drove down to the Old Bailey, where they sat together on the bench till nearly seven o'clock, till which time the court was engaged upon the trial of a man for forgery. Amid the bustle consequent upon the close of this long trial, Mr Hillary, after introducing his noble friend to one of the aldermen, happened to cast his eyes to the bar, which had been just quitted by the death-doomed convict he had heard tried, when they fell upon the figure of Elliott, who seemed to have been placed there for some minutes, and

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was standing with a mournful expression of countenance, apparently lost in thought. Even Mr Hillary's hard heart might have been touched by the altered appearance of his victim, who was greatly emaciated, and seemed scarce able to stand erect in his most humiliating position.

Mr Hillary knew well the perfect innocence of Elliott; and his own guilty soul thrilled within him, as his eye encountered for an instant the steadfast but sorrowful eye of the prisoner. In vain did he attempt to appear conversing carelessly with Lord Scamp, who was himself too much agitated to attend to him! The prisoner pleaded Not Guilty. No counsel had been retained for the prosecution, nor did any appear for the defence. The court, therefore, had to examine the witnesses; and, suffice it to say, that after about half an hour's trial, in the course of which Mr Hillary was called as a witness, and trembled so excessively as to call forth some encouraging expressions from the Bench, the Judge who tried the case decided that there was no evidence worth a straw against the prisoner, and consequently directed the Jury to acquit him, which they did instantly, adding their unanimous opinion, that the charge against him appeared both frivolous and malicious.

"Am I to understand, my Lord, that I leave the court freed from all taint, from all dishonour?" inquired Elliott, after the foreman had expressed the opinion of the Jury.

"Certainly—most undoubtedly you do," replied the Judge.

"And if I think fit I am at liberty hereafter to expose and punish those who have wickedly conspired to place me here on a false charge?"

"Of course, you have your remedy against any one," replied the cautious Judge, "that is, whom you can prove to have acted illegally—in the manner you have just mentioned."

Elliott darted a glance at Mr Hillary, which made his blood rush tumultuously towards his guilty heart, and bowing respectfully to the court, withdrew from the ignominious spot which he had been so infamously compelled to occupy. He left the prison a little after eight o'clock; and wretched indeed were his feelings as the turnkey, opening the outermost of the heavy iron-bound and spiked doors, bade him farewell, gruffly adding—"Hope we mayn't meet again, my hearty!"

"I hope not, indeed!" replied poor Elliott with a sigh; and, descending the steps, found himself in the street. He scarce knew, for a moment, whither to direct his steps, staggering, overpowered with the strange feeling of suddenly recovered liberty. The sad reality of his destitution, however, soon forced itself upon him. What was to become of him? He felt wearied and faint, and almost wished he had begged the favour of sleeping for the night even in the dreary dungeon from which he had been but that moment released. Thus were his thoughts occupied, as he moved slowly towards Fleet Street, when a female figure approached him, muffled in a large shawl.

"Henry—dearest Henry!" murmured the half-stifled voice of Miss Hillary, stretching towards him both her hands; "so, you are free! You have escaped from the snare of the wicked! Thank God—thank God! Oh, what have we passed through since we last met! Why, Henry, will you not speak to me? Do you forsake the daughter for the sin of her father?"

Elliott stood staring at her as if stupefied.

"Miss Hillary!" he murmured incredulously.

"Yes—yes! I am Mary Hillary; I am your own Mary. But oh, Henry, how altered you are! How thin! How pale and ill you look! I cannot bear to see you!" And, covering her face with her hands, she burst into a flood of tears.

"I can hardly—believe—that it is Miss Hillary," muttered Elliott. "But—your *father!*—Mr Hillary! What will he say if he sees you? Are not you ashamed of being seen talking to a wretch like me, just slipped out of Newgate?"

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"Ashamed? My Henry—do not torture me! I am heart-broken for your sake! It is my own flesh and blood that I am ashamed of. That it could ever be so base"——

Elliott suddenly snatched her into his arms, and folded her to his breast with convulsive energy.

If the malignant eye of her father had seen them at that moment!

She had obtained information that her father was gone to the Old Bailey with Lord Scamp, and soon contrived to follow them, unnoticed by the domestics. She could not get into the court, as the gallery was already filled, and had been lingering about the door for upwards of four hours, making eager inquiries from those who left the court, as to the name of the prisoner who was being tried. She vehemently urged him to accompany her direct to Bullion House, confront her father, and demand reparation for the wrongs he had inflicted. "I will stand beside you—I will never leave you—let him turn us both out of his house together!"—continued the excited girl—"I begin to loathe it—to feel indifferent about everything it contains—except my poor, unoffending—dying mother!—Come, come, Henry, and play the man!"—But Elliott's good sense led him to expostulate with her, and he did so successfully, representing to her the useless peril attending such a proceeding. He forced her into the coach that was waiting for her—refused the purse which she had tried nearly twenty times to thrust into his hand—promised to make a point of writing to her the next day in such a manner as should be sure of reaching her, and after mutually affectionate adieus, he ordered the coachman to drive off as quickly as possible towards Highbury. She found Bullion House in a tumult on account of her absence.

"So—your intended victim has escaped!" exclaimed Miss Hillary, suddenly presenting herself before her father, whom Lord Scamp had but just left.

"Ah, Polly—my own Poll—and is it you, indeed?" said her father, evidently the worse for wine, approaching her unsteadily—"Come, kiss me, love!—where—where have you been, you little puss—puss—puss?"——

"*To Newgate, sir!*" replied his daughter, in a quick, stern tone, and retreated a step or two from her advancing father.

"N—n—ew-gate!—New—new—gate!" he echoed, as if the word had suddenly sobered him. "Well—Mary—and what of that?" he added, drawing his breath heavily.

"To think that *your* blood flows in these veins of mine!" continued Miss Hillary, with extraordinary energy, extending her arms towards him. "I call you *father*—and yet"—she shuddered—"you are a guilty man—you have laid a snare for the innocent. Tremble, sir! tremble! Do you love your daughter? I tell you, father, that if your design had succeeded, she would have lain dead in your house within an hour after it was told her! Oh, what—what am I saying?—where have I been?" She pressed her hand to her forehead; her high excitement had passed away. Her father had recovered from the shock occasioned by her abrupt reappearance. He walked to the door, and shut it.

"Sit down, Mary," said he sternly, pointing to the sofa. She obeyed him in silence.

"Now, girl, tell me—are you drunk or sober? Where have you been? What have you been doing?" he inquired with a furious air. She hid her face in her hands, and wept.

"You are driving me mad, father!" she murmured.

"Come, come!—What!—you're playing the coward now, Miss!—Where's all your bold spirit gone?—What! can't you bully me any more?—Snivel on, then, and beg my forgiveness!—What do you mean, Miss," said he, extending towards her his clenched fist—"by talking about this fellow Elliott being—my VICTIM? Eh!—Tell me, you audacious hussy! you ungrateful vixen! what d'ye mean?—Say, what the d——l has come to you?" She made no answer, but continued with her face concealed in her hands. "Oh—I'm up to all this! I

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see what you're after! I know you, young dare-devil!—You think you can bully me into letting you marry this brute—this beggar—this swindler!—Ah, ha! you don't know me though! By ——, but I believe you and he are in league to take my life!" He paused, gasping with rage. His daughter remained silent. "What has turned you so against *me?*" he continued, in the same violent tone and manner. "Haven't I been a kind father to you all my"——

"Oh yes, yes, yes! dear father, I know you have!" sobbed Miss Hillary, rising and throwing herself at his feet.

"Then why are you behaving in this strange way to me?" he inquired, somewhat softening his tone. "Mary, isn't your poor mother up-stairs dying; and if I lose her and you too, what's to become of me?" Miss Hillary wept bitterly. "You'd better kill your old father outright at once, than kill him in this slow way! or send him to a madhouse, as you surely will! Come, Molly," he added, in a low, tremulous voice—"My own little Molly—promise me to think no more of this wretched fellow! Depend on't he'll be revenged on me yet, and do me an injury if he can! Surely the devil himself sent the man across our family peace! I don't want you to marry Lord Scamp since you don't like him—not I! It's true I have longed this many a year to marry you to some nobleman—to see you great and happy; but—if you can't fancy my Lord Scamp, why—I give him up! And if I give *him* up, won't you meet me half-way, and make us all happy again by giving up this fellow so unworthy of you? He comes from a d——d bad stock, believe me! Remember—his father gambled and—cut his throat," added Hillary in a low tone, instinctively trembling as he recollected the effect produced upon Elliott by his utterance of these words on a former occasion. "Only think, Molly! *My daughter*, with a fortune—scraped together during a long life by her father's hard labour—Molly—the only thing her father loves, excepting always your poor mother—to fling herself into the arms of a common thief—a—a jail-bird—a felon—a fellow on his way to the gallows"——

"Father!" said Miss Hillary solemnly, suddenly looking up into her father's face, "you KNOW that this is false! You know that he is acquitted—that he is innocent—you knew it from the first—that the charge was false!"

Mr Hillary, who had imagined he was succeeding in changing his daughter's determination, was immeasurably disappointed and shocked at this evidence of his failure. He bit his lips violently, and looked at her fiercely, his countenance darkening upon her sensibly. Scarce suppressing a horrible execration—turning a deaf ear to all her passionate entreaties on behalf of Elliott—he rose, forcibly detached her arms, which were clinging to his knees, and rung the bell.

"Send Miss Hillary's maid here," said he hoarsely. The woman, with a frightened air, soon made her appearance.

"Attend Miss Hillary to her room immediately," said he sternly; and his disconsolate daughter was led out of his presence, to spend a night of sleepless agony—

——— On bed
Delirious flung, sleep from her pillow flies;
All night she tosses, nor the balmy power
In any posture finds; till the grey morn
Lifts her pale lustre on the paler wretch
Exanimate by love; and then, perhaps,
Exhausted nature sinks awhile to rest,
Still interrupted by distracted dreams,
That o'er the sick imagination rise,
And in black colours paint the mimic scene!*

Many more such scenes as the one above described followed between Mr Hillary and his daughter. He never left her from the moment he entered till he quitted his house on his return to the City. Threats, entreaties, promises—magnificent promises—all the artillery of persuasion or coercion that he knew how to use, he brought to bear upon his wearied and harassed daughter, but in vain. He suddenly took her with him into Scotland; and after spending there a wretched week

* Thomson's *Seasons*.

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or two, returned more dispirited than he had left. He hurried her to every place of amusement he could think of. Now he would give party after party, forgetful of his poor wife's situation; then let a week or longer elapse in dull and morose seclusion. Once he was carried by his passion to such a pitch of frenzy, that he actually struck her on the side of her head, and severely!—nor manifested any signs of remorse when he beheld her staggering under the blow. But why stay to particularise these painful scenes? Was *this* the way to put an end to the obstinate infatuation of his daughter? No—but to increase and strengthen it—to add fuel to the fire. Her womanly pride—her sense of justice—came—powerful auxiliaries—to support her love for the injured Elliott. She bore his ill-treatment at length with a kind of apathy. She had long lost all *respect* for her father, conscious as she was that he had acted most atrociously towards Elliott; and, presently—after "some natural tears" for her poor mother, she became wearied of the monotonous misery she endured at Bullion House, and ready to fly from it.

Passing over an interval of a month or two, during which she continued to keep up some correspondence with Elliott, who, however, never told her the extreme misery—the absolute *want* he was suffering, since her father refused to give him a character such as would procure his admission to another situation, and he was therefore reduced to the most precarious means possible of obtaining the scantiest livelihood. Miss Hillary, overhearing her father make arrangements for taking her on a long visit to the Continent—where he might, for all she knew, leave her to end her days in some convent—fled that night in desperation from Bullion House, and sought refuge in the humble residence of an old servant of her father's. Here she lived for a few days in terrified seclusion—but she might have spared her alarms; for, as she subsequently discovered, her father received the news of her flight with sullen apathy—merely exclaiming, "Well—as she has made her bed she must lie upon it." He made no inquiries after her, nor attempted to induce her to return. When at length apprised of her residence, he did not go near the house. He had evidently given up the struggle in despair, and felt indifferent to any fate that might befall his daughter. He heard that the bans of marriage between her and Elliott were published in the parish church where her new residence was situated—but offered no opposition whatever. He affixed his signature, when required, to the document necessary to transfer to her the sum of money—£600, standing in her name in the funds, in sullen silence;—he had evidently done with her, for ever.

So this ill-fated couple became man and wife;—no one attending at the brief and cheerless ceremony but a friend of Elliott's, and the humble couple from whose house she had been married.

Elliott had commenced legal proceedings against Mr Hillary on account of his malicious prosecution. He was certain of success, and of thereby wringing from his reluctant and wicked father-in-law a very considerable sum of money—a little fortune, in his present circumstances. With a noble forbearance, however, and yielding to the entreaties of his wife, who had not lost, in her marriage, the feelings of a daughter towards her erring parent—he abandoned them; his solicitor writing, at his desire, to inform Mr Hillary of the fact, that his client had determined to discontinue proceedings, though he had had the certainty of success before him—and that, for his wife's sake, he freely forgave Mr Hillary.

This letter was returned with an insolent message from Mr Hillary—and there the affair ended.

A few days after her marriage, Mrs Elliott received the following communication from Mr Jeffreys:—

"Madam,

"Mr Hillary has instructed me to apprise you, as I now do with great pain, of his unalterable determination never again to recognise you as his

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daughter, or receive any communication, of any description, under any circumstances, from either your husband or yourself — addressed either to Mr or Mrs Hillary: whom your undutiful and ungrateful conduct, he says, has separated from you for ever.

"He will allow to be forwarded to any place you may direct, whatever articles belonging to you may yet remain at Bullion House, on your sending a list of them to my office.

"Spare me the pain of a personal interview on the matter; and believe me when I unfeignedly lament being the medium of communicating the intelligence contained in this letter.

"I am, Madam,

"Your humble servant,

"JONATHAN JEFFREYS.

"To Mrs Elliott."

With a faint heart and trembling hand, assisted by her husband, she set down, after much hesitation, a few articles—books, dresses, one or two jewels, and her little dog, Cato. Him, however, Mr Hillary had caused to be destroyed the day after he discovered her flight!—The other articles were sent to her immediately; and with a bitter fit of weeping did she receive them, and read the fate of her merry little favourite, who had frisked about her to the last with sportive affection, when almost everybody else scowled at and forsook her!—Thus closed for ever, as she too surely felt, all connection and communication with her father and mother.

Elliott regarded his noble-spirited wife, as well he might, with a fondness bordering on idolatry. The vast sacrifice she had made for him overpowered him whenever he adverted to it, and inspired him, not only with the most tender and enthusiastic affection and gratitude, but with the eagerest anxiety to secure her by his own efforts at least a comfortable home. He engaged small but respectable lodgings in the Borough, to which they removed the day succeeding their marriage; and after making desperate exertions, he had the gratification of procuring a situation as clerk in a respectable mercantile house in the City, and which he had obtained through the friendly but secret services of one of the members of the firm he had last served, and who at the same time slipped a fifty-pound note into his hand. His superior qualifications secured him a salary of £90 a-year, with the promise of its increase if he continued to give satisfaction.

Thus creditably settled, the troubled couple began to breathe a little more freely; and in the course of a twelvemonth. Mrs Elliott's poignant grief first declined into melancholy, which was at length mitigated into a pensive if not cheerful resignation. She moved in her little circumscribed sphere as if she had never occupied one of splendour and affluence. How happily passed the hours they spent together in the evening after he had quitted the scene of his daily labours—he reading or playing on his flute—which he did very beautifully, and she busily employed with her needle! How they loved their neat little parlour, as they sometimes involuntarily compared it —*she*, with the spacious and splendid apartments which had witnessed so much of her suffering at Bullion House —*he*, with the dark and dreadful cells of Newgate! And their Sundays! What sweet and calm repose they brought! How she loved to walk with him after church hours in the fresh and breezy places—the Parks —though a pang occasionally shot through her heart when she observed her father's carriage—he the solitary occupant—rolling leisurely past them! The very carriage in which she and her little Cato had so often driven! But thoughts such as these seldom intruded; and when they did, only drove her closer to her husband—*a pearl* to her, indeed—if it may be not irreverently spoken—*of great price*—a price she never once regretted to have paid.

Ye fond unfortunate souls! what days of darkness were in store for you!

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About eighteen months after their marriage, Mrs Elliott, after a lingering and dangerous *accouchement*, gave birth to a son—the little creature I had seen. How they consulted together about the means of apprising Mr Hillary of the birth of his grandson—and fondly suggested to each other the *possibility* of its melting the stern stubborn resolution he had formed concerning them!—He heard of it, however, manifesting about as much emotion as he would on being told by his housekeeper of the kittening of his kitchen cat!—The long fond letter she had made, in her weakness, such an effort to write to him, and which poor Elliott had trudged all the way to Highbury to deliver, with tremulous hand, and a beating heart, to the porter at the lodge of Bullion House, was returned to them the next morning by the twopenny post, unopened! What delicious agony was it to them to look at—to hug to their bosoms—the little creature that had no friend—no relative on earth but them! How often did his eye open surprisedly upon his mother, when her scorching tears dropped upon his tiny face!

She had just weaned her child, and was still suffering from the effects of nursing, when there happened the first misfortune that had befallen them since their marriage. Mr Elliott was one night behind his usual hour of returning from the City—and his anxious wife's suspense was terminated by the appearance at their door of a hackney coach, from which there stepped out a strange gentleman, who hastily knocked at the door, and returned to assist another gentleman in lifting out the apparently inanimate figure of her husband! Pale as death, she rushed down stairs, her child in her arms, and was saved from fainting only by hearing her husband's voice, in a low tone, assuring her that "he was not much hurt"—that he had had "a slight accident." The fact was, that in attempting most imprudently to shoot across the street between two approaching vehicles, he had been knocked down by the pole of one of them—a post-chaise; and when down, before the post-boy could stop, one of the horses had kicked the prostrate passenger upon his right side. The two humane gentlemen who had accompanied him home, did all in their power to assuage the terrors of Mrs Elliott. One of them ran for the medical man, who fortunately lived close at hand; and he pronounced the case to be, though a serious one, and requiring great care, not attended with dangerous symptoms—at least at *present*.

His patient never quitted his bed for three months; at the end of which period, his employers sent a very kind message, regretting the accident that had happened, and still more, that they felt compelled to fill up his situation in their house, as he had been now so long absent, and was likely to continue absent for a much longer time: and they at the same time paid him all the salary that was due in respect of the period during which he had been absent, and a quarter's salary beyond it. Poor Elliott was thrown by this intelligence into a state of deep despondency, which was increased by his surgeon's continuing to use the language of caution, and assuring him—disheartening words!—that he must not think of engaging in active business for some time yet to come. It was after a sleepless night that he and his wife stepped into a hackney coach, and drove to the bank to sell out £50 of their precious store, in order to liquidate some of the heavy expenses attendant on his long illness. Alas! what prospect was there, either of replacing what they now took, or of preserving the remainder from similar diminutions?—It was now that his admirable wife acted indeed the part of a guardian angel; soothing by her fond attentions his querulous and alarmed spirit—and, that she might do so, struggling hourly to conceal her own grievous apprehensions—her hopeless despondency. As may be supposed, it had now become necessary to practise the closest economy in order to keep themselves out of debt, and to avoid the necessity of constantly drawing upon the very

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moderate sum which yet stood in his name in the funds. How often, nevertheless, did the fond creature risk a chiding—and a severe one—from her husband—by secretly procuring for him some of the little delicacies recommended by their medical attendant, and of which no entreaties could ever prevail upon her to partake!

Some time after this, her husband recovered sufficiently to be able to walk out; but being peremptorily prohibited from engaging, for some time to come, in his old situation, or any one requiring similar efforts, he put an advertisement in the newspapers, offering to arrange the most involved merchant's accounts, &c., "with accuracy and expedition,"—at his own residence, and on such very moderate terms as soon brought him several offers of employment. He addressed himself with a natural but most imprudent eagerness to the troublesome and exhausting task he had undertaken: and the consequence was, that he purchased the opportunity of a month's labour, by a twelvemonth's incapacitation for *all* labour! A dreadful blow this was, and borne by neither of them with their former equanimity. Mrs Elliott renewed her hopeless attempt to soften the obduracy of her father's heart. She waited for him repeatedly in the street at the hours of his quitting and returning to the City, and attempted to speak to him, but he hurried from her as from a common street-beggar. She wrote letter after letter, carrying some herself, and sending others by the post, by which latter medium all were invariably returned to her! She began to think with horror of her father's inexorable disposition—and her prayers to heaven for its interference in her behalf—or at least the faith that inspired them became fainter and fainter.

Mr Hillary's temper had become ten times worse than before, since his daughter's departure, owing to that as well as sundry other causes. Several of his speculations in business proved to be very unfortunate, and to entail harassing consequences, which kept him constantly in a state of feverish irritability. Poor Mrs Hillary continued still a hopeless paralytic, deprived of the powers both of speech and motion: all chance, therefore, of *her* precious intercession was too probably for ever at an end. In vain did Mrs Elliott strive to interest several of her relatives in her behalf: they *professed* too great a dread of Mr Hillary to attempt interfering in such a delicate and dangerous matter; and *really* had a very obvious interest in continuing, if not increasing, the grievous and unnatural estrangement existing between him and his daughter. There was one of them—a Miss Gubbley, a maiden aunt or cousin of Mrs Elliott, that had wormed herself completely into Mr Hillary's confidence, and having been once a kind of housekeeper in the establishment, now reigned supreme at Bullion House; an artful, selfish, vulgar person, an object to Mrs Elliott of mingled terror and disgust. This was the being that,

Toad-like, sat squatting at the ear

of her father, probably daily suggesting every hateful consideration that could tend to widen the breach already existing between him and his daughter. This creature, too, had poor Mrs Elliott besieged with passionate and humiliating entreaties, till they were suddenly and finally checked by a display of such intolerable insolence and heartlessness as determined Mrs Elliott, come what would, to make no further efforts in *that* quarter. She returned home, on the occasion just alluded to, worn out in body and mind. A copious flood of tears, accompanying her narration to her husband of what had happened, relieved her excitement; she took her child into her arms, and his playful little fingers unconsciously touching the deep responsive chords of a mother's heart, she forgot, in the ecstasy of the moment, as she folded him to her bosom, all that had occurred to make her unhappy, and add to the gloom of their darkening prospects!

Closer and closer now became their retrenchments; every source of expenditure being cut off that was not absolutely indispensable. None, she

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told me, occasioned them a greater pang than giving up their little pew in —— Church, and betaking themselves, Sunday after Sunday, to the humbler and more appropriate sittings provided in the aisle. But was this, their communion and contact with poverty, unfavourable to devotion? No. The serpent PRIDE was crushed, and dared not lift his bruised head to disturb or alarm! God then drew near to the deserted couple, "weary, and heavy-laden," and "cast out" by their *earthly* father! Yes—there she experienced a holy calm—a resignation—a reality in the services and duties of religion—which she had never known when sitting amid the trappings of ostentatious wealth, in the gorgeous pew of her father!

They were obliged to seek cheaper lodgings—moderate as was the rent required for those they had so long occupied—where they might practise a severer economy than they chose to exhibit in the presence of those who had known them when such sacrifices were not necessary—and which had also the advantage of being in the neighbourhood of a person who had promised Elliott occasional employment as collector of rents, &c., as well as the balancing of his books every month. Long before his health warranted, did he undertake these severe labours, driven to desperation by a heavy and not over-reasonable bill delivered him by his medical attendant, and of which he pressed for the payment. With an aching heart poor Elliott sold out sufficient to discharge it, and resolved at all hazards to recommence his labours; for there was left only £70 or £80 in the Bank—and he shuddered when he thought of it! They had quitted these their second lodgings for those in which I found them, about three months before her first visit to me, in order to be near another individual—himself an accountant, who had promised to employ Elliott frequently as a kind of deputy, or *fag*. His were the books piled before poor Elliott when first I saw him! Thus had he been engaged, to the great injury of his health, for many weeks—his own mental energy and determination flattering him with a delusive confidence in his physical vigour! Poor Mrs Elliott also had contrived, being not unacquainted with ornamental needlework, to obtain some employment of that description. Heavy was her heart as she sat toiling beside her husband—who was busily engaged in such a manner as would not admit of their conversing together—when her thoughts wandered over the scenes of their past history, and anticipated their gloomy prospects. Was she now paying the fearful penalty of disobedience? But where was the sin she had committed, in forming an honest and ardent attachment to one whom she was satisfied was every way her equal, save in wealth? How could he have a right to dictate to her heart who should be an object of its affections? To dispose of it as of an article of merchandise—Had he any right thus to consign her to perpetual misery? To unite her to a titled villain merely to gratify his weak pride and ambition—Had she not a right to resist such an attempt?—The same Scripture that has said, *children, obey your parents*, has also said, *fathers, provoke not your children to wrath*. But had she not been too precipitate—or unduly obstinate in adhering to the man her father abhorred?—Ought anything—alas!—to have caused her to fly from her suffering mother? Oh, what might have been *her* sufferings! But surely nothing could justify or extenuate the unrelenting spirit which actuated her father! And that father she knew to have acted basely—to have played the part of a devil towards the man whom he hated—perhaps, nay too probably, he was meditating some equally base and desperate scheme concerning herself! She silently appealed to God from amidst this conflict of her thoughts and feelings, and implored his forgiveness of her rash conduct. Her agonies were heightened by the consciousness that there existed reasons for self-condemnation. But she thought of—she looked at—her husband; and her heart told her, that she should act similarly were the past again to happen!

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So, then, here was this virtuous unhappy couple—he declining in health just when that health was most precious—she, too, worn out with labour and anxiety, and likely—alas!—to bring another heir to wretchedness into the world, for she was considerably advanced in pregnancy—both becoming less capable of the labour which was growing, alas! daily more essential—with scarcely £40 to fall back upon in the most desperate emergency:—Such was the dreadful situation of Mr and Mrs Elliott soon after the period of my first introduction to them. It was after listening to one of the most interesting and melancholy narratives that the annals of human suffering could supply, that I secretly resolved to take upon myself the responsibility of appealing to Mr Hillary in their behalf, hoping that for the honour of humanity my efforts would not be entirely unavailing.

He had quitted Bullion House within a twelvemonth after his daughter's flight, and removed to a spacious and splendid mansion in —— Square, in the neighbourhood of my residence; and where—strange coincidence!—I was requested to attend Mrs Hillary, who at length seemed approaching the close of her long-protracted sufferings. Mr Hillary had become quite an altered man since the defection of his daughter. Lord Scamp had introduced him freely into the society of persons of rank and station, who welcomed into their circles the possessor of so splendid a fortune; and he found, in the incessant excitement and amusement of fashionable society, a refuge from reflection, from those "compunctious visitings of remorse" which made his solitude dreadful and insupportable. I found him just such a man as I have already had occasion to describe him; a vain, vulgar, selfish, testy, overbearing old man; one of the most difficult and dangerous persons on earth to deal with in such a negotiation as that I had so rashly, but Heaven knows with the best intentions, undertaken.

"Well, Mr Hillary," said I, entering the drawing-room, where he was standing alone, with his hands in his pockets, at the window, watching some disturbance in the square—"I am afraid I can't bring you any better news about Mrs Hillary. She weakens hourly!"

"Ah, poor creature, I see she does—indeed!" he replied sighing, quitting the window, and offering me one of the many beautiful chairs that stood in the splendid apartment. "Well, she's been a good wife to me, I must say—a *very* good wife, and I've always thought and said so." Thrusting his hands into the pockets of his ample white waistcoat, he walked up and down the room. "Well, poor soul! she's had all that money could get her, doctor, however, and she knows it—that's a comfort—but it a'n't *money* can keep death off, is it?"

"No, indeed, Mr Hillary; but it can mitigate some of its terrors. What a consolation will it be for you hereafter, to reflect that Mrs Hillary has had everything your noble fortune could procure for her!"——

"Ay, and no grudging neither! I'd do ten times what I have done—what's money to me? So—poor Poll, and she's going! We never had a real quarrel in our lives!" he continued, in a somewhat subdued tone. "I shall miss her when she is gone!—I shall indeed! I could find many to fill her place, if I had a mind, I'll warrant me—but I—I—poor Poll!"

* * "Yes," I said presently, in answer to some general remark he had made, "we medical men do certainly see the worst side of human life. Pain—illness—death—are bad enough of themselves—but when *poverty* steps in too"——

"Ay, I dare say—bad enough, as you say—bad enough—a-hem!"

"I have this very day seen a mournful instance of accumulated human misery; poverty, approaching starvation, illness, distress of mind.—Ah, Mr Hillary, what a scene I witnessed yesterday!" I continued, with emotion; "a man who is well born, who has seen better"——

"Better days—ay, exactly. Double-refined misery, as they would say in

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the City. By the way, what a valuable charity that is—I'm a subscriber to it—for the relief of decayed tradesmen! One feels such a pleasure in it! I dare say now—I do believe—let me see—£200 would not cover what I get rid of one way or another in this kind of way every year—by the way, doctor, I'll ring for tea; you'll take a cup?" I nodded; and in a few minutes a splendid tea-service made its appearance.

"Do you know, doctor, I've some notion of being remembered after I'm gone, and it has often struck me that if I were to leave what I have to build an hospital or something of that sort, in this part of the town, it wouldn't be amiss"——

"A noble ambition, sir, indeed!—But, as I was observing, the poor people I saw yesterday—such misery! such fortitude!"

"Ah, yes! Proper sort of people, just the right sort, to put into—a-hem!—*Hillary's Hospital.* It don't sound badly, does it?"

"Excellently well. But the fact is"—I observed that he was becoming rather fidgety, but I was resolved not to be beaten from my point—"I'm going, in short, Mr Hillary, to take a liberty which nothing could warrant but"——

"You're going to *beg*, doctor, now a'n't you?" he interrupted briskly; "but the fact is, my maxim has long been never to give a farthing in charity that any one shall know of but two people: I, and the people I give to. That's *my* notion of true charity; and, besides, it saves one a vast deal of trouble. But if *you* really think—if it really is a deserving case—why—a-hem! I *might* perhaps—Dr —— is so well known for his charitable turn.—Now, a'n't this the way you begin upon *all* your great patients?" he continued, with an air of supreme complacency. I bowed and smiled, humouring his vanity. "Well, in such a case—hem! hem!—I might, once in a way, break in upon my rule," and he transferred his left hand from his waistcoat to his breeches pocket; "so, there's a guinea for you. But don't on any account name it to any one. Don't, doctor. I don't want to be talked about; and we people that are known do get so many"——

"But, Mr Hillary, surely I may tell my poor friends, to whom your charity is destined, the *name* of the generous"——

"Oh, ay! Do as you please for the matter of that. Who are they? What are they? Where do they live? I'm governor of ——." I trembled.

"They live at present in —— Street; but I doubt, poor things, whether they can stop there much longer, for their landlady is becoming very clamorous"——

"Ah, the old story!—the old story! Landlords are generally, especially the smaller sort, such tyrants, a'n't they?"

"Yes, too frequently such is the case! But I was going to tell you of these poor people. They have not been married many years, and they married very unfortunately"—Mr Hillary, who had for some time been sitting down on the sofa, here rose and walked rather more quickly than he had been walking before—"contrary to the wishes of their family, who have forsaken them, and don't know what their sufferings now are—how virtuous—how patient they are! And they have got a child too, that will soon, I fear, be crying for the bread it may not get." Mr Hillary was evidently becoming disturbed. I saw that a little of the colour had fled from about his upper lip, but he said nothing, nor did he seem disposed to interrupt me. "I'm sure, by the way," I continued, as calmly as I could, "that if I could but prevail upon their family to see them, before it is too late, that explanations might"——

"What's the *name* of your friends, sir?" said Mr Hillary, suddenly stopping, and standing opposite to me, with his arms almost a-kimbo, and his eyes looking keenly into mine.

"Elliott, sir"——

"I—I thought as much, sir!" he replied, dashing the perspiration from his forehead: "I knew what you were driving at? D——n it, sir—I see it

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all! You came here to insult me—you did, sir!" His agitation increased.

"Forgive me, Mr Hillary; I assure you"——

"No, sir! I won't hear you, sir! I've heard enough, sir! too much, sir! You've said enough, sir, to show me what sort of a man you are, sir! D——n it sir—it's too bad"——

"You mistake me, Mr Hillary," said I calmly.

"No, I don't, sir, but you've cursedly mistaken *me*, sir. If you know those people, and choose to take up their—to—to—patronise, do, sir, d——n it! if you like, and haven't anything better to do"——

"Forgive me, sir, if I have hurt your feelings"——

"Hurt my feelings, sir! What d'ye mean, sir? Every man hurts my feelings that insults me, sir, and you have insulted me!"

"How, sir?" I inquired sternly, in my turn. "Oblige me, sir, by explaining these extraordinary expressions!"

"You know well enough! I see through it. But if you—really, sir—you've got a guinea of mine, sir, in your pocket. Consider it your fee for this visit; the last I'll trouble you to pay, sir!" he stuttered, almost unintelligible with fury.

I threw his guinea upon the floor as if its touch were pollution. "Farewell, Mr Hillary," said I, deliberately drawing on my gloves. "May your death-bed be as calm and happy as that I have this day attended up-stairs for the last time."

He looked at me earnestly, as if staggered by the reflections I had suggested, and turned very pale. I bowed haughtily, and retired. As I drove home, my heated fancy struck out a scheme for shaming or terrifying the old monster I had quitted into something like pity or repentance, by attacking and exposing him in some newspaper; but by the next morning I perceived the many objections there were to such a course. I need hardly say that I did not communicate to the Elliotts the fact of my attempted intercession with Mr Hillary.

It was grievous to see the desperate but unavailing struggle made by both of them to retrieve their circumstances, and provide against the expensive and trying time that was approaching. He was slaving at his account-books from morning to midnight, scarce allowing himself a few minutes for his meals; and she had become a mere fag to a fashionable milliner, undertaking all such work as could be done at her own residence, often sitting up half the night, and yet earning the merest trifle. Then she had also to look after her husband and child, for they could not afford to keep a regular attendant. Several articles of her husband's dress and her own, and almost all that belonged to the child, she often washed at night with her own hands.

As if these unfortunate people were not sufficently afflicted already—as if any additional ingredient in their cup of sorrow were requisite—symptoms of a more grievous calamity than had yet befallen poor Elliott began to exhibit themselves in him. His severe and incessant application, by day and night, coupled with the perpetual agitation and excitement of his nervous system, began to tell upon his eyesight. I found him, on one of my morning visits, labouring under great excitement; and on questioning him, I feared he had but too good reason for his alarm, as he described, with fearful distinctness, certain sensations and appearances which infallibly betokened, in my opinion, after examining his eyes, the presence of incipient *amaurosis* in both eyes. He spoke of deep-seated pains in the orbits—perpetual sparks and flashes of light—peculiar haloes seen around the candle—dimness of sight—and several other symptoms, which I found, on inquiry, had been for some time in existence, but he had never thought of noticing them till they forced themselves upon his startled attention.

"Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, clasping his hands and looking upwards, "spare my sight! Oh, spare my sight—or what will become of me? Beggary seems to be my lot—but *blindness* to be added!" He paused, and looked the image of despair.

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"Undoubtedly I should deceive you, Mr Elliott," said I, after making several further inquiries, "if I were to say that there was no danger in your case. Unfortunately, there does exist ground for apprehending that, unless you abstain, and in a great measure, from so severely taxing your eyesight as you have of late, you will run the risk of permanently injuring it."

"Oh, doctor! it is easy to talk," he exclaimed, with involuntary bitterness, "of my ceasing to use and try my sight; but how am I to do it? How am I to live? Tell me *that!* Will money drop from the skies into my lap, or bread into the mouths of my wife and child! What is to become of us? Merciful God! and just at this time, too! My wife pregnant"—I thanked God she was not present!—"our last penny almost slipping from our hands—and I, who should be the stay and support of my family, becoming BLIND! Oh, God—oh, God, what frightful crimes have I committed, to be punished thus? Would I had been transported or hanged," he added suddenly, "when the old ruffian threw me into Newgate! But"—he turned ghastly pale—"If I were to die *now*, what good could it do?" At that moment the slow, heavy, wearied step of his wife was heard upon the stairs, and her entrance put an end to her husband's exclamations. I entreated him to intermit, at least for a time, his attentions to business, and prescribed some active remedies, and he promised to obey my instructions. Mrs Elliott sat beside me with a sad exhausted air, which touched me almost to tears. What a situation—what a prospect was hers! How was she to prepare for her coming confinement? How procure the most ordinary comforts—the necessary attendance? Deprived as her husband and child must be for a time of her affectionate and vigilant attentions, what was to become of them? Who supply her place? Her countenance too plainly showed that all these topics constantly agitated her mind.

A day or two after this interview, I brought them the intelligence I had seen in the newspapers of Mrs Hillary's death, which I communicated to them very carefully, fearful of the effect it might produce upon Mrs Elliott in her critical situation. She wept bitterly; but the event had been too long expected by her to occasion any violent exhibition of grief. As they lay awake that night in melancholy converse, it suddenly occurred to Mrs Elliott that the event which had just happened might afford them a last chance of regaining her father's affections, and they determined to seize the opportunity of appealing to his feelings when they were softened by his recent bereavement. The next morning the wretched couple set out on their dreary pilgrimage to —— Square—it having been agreed that Elliott should accompany her to within a door or two of her father's house, and there await the issue of her visit. With slow and trembling steps, having relinquished his arm, she approached the dreaded building, whose large windows were closed from the top to the bottom of the house. The sight of them overcame her; and she paused for a moment, holding by the area railings.

What dark and bitter thoughts and recollections crowded in a few seconds through her mind! Here, in this great mansion, was her living—her tyrannical—her mortally offended father; here lay the remains of her poor good mother—whom she had fled from—whose last thoughts might perhaps have been about her persecuted daughter—and that daughter was now trembling like a guilty thing before the frowning portals of her widowed, and, it might be, inexorable father. She felt very faint, and beckoning hastily to her husband, he stepped forward to support her, and led her from the door. After slowly walking round the square, she returned, as before, to the gloomy mansion of her father, ascended the steps, and, with a shaking hand, pulled the bell.

"What do you want, young woman?" inquired a servant from the area.

"I wish to see Joseph—is he at

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home?" she replied, in so faint a voice that the only word audible in the area was that of Joseph, the porter, who had entered into her father's service in that capacity two or three years before her marriage. In a few minutes Joseph made his appearance at the hall-door, which he softly opened.

"Joseph!—Josepn! I'm very ill," she murmured, leaning against the door-post—"let me sit in your chair for a moment."

"Lord have mercy on me—my young mistress!" exclaimed Joseph, casting a hurried look behind him, as if terrified at being seen in conversation with her—and then hastily stepping forward he caught her in his arms, for she had fainted. He placed her in his great covered chair, and called one of the female servants, who brought up with her, at his request, a glass of water—taking the stranger to be some relative or friend of the porter's. He forced a little into her mouth—the maid loosened her bonnet-string, and after a few minutes she uttered a deep sigh, and her consciousness returned.

"Don't hurry yourself, Miss—*Ma'am* I mean," stammered the porter, in a low tone. "You can stay here a little—I don't think any one's stirring but us servants—you see, ma'am, though I suppose you know—my poor mistress"——She shook her head, and sobbed.

"Yes, Joseph, I know it! Did she—did she—die easily?" inquired Mrs Elliott in a faint whisper, grasping his hand.

"Yes, ma'am," he answered in a low tone; "poor lady, she'd been so long ailing, that no doubt death wasn't anything partic'lar to her, like—and so she went out at last like the snuff of a candle, as one might say—poor old soul!—we'd none of us, not my master even, heard the sound of her voice for months, not to say years even!"

"And my—my father—how does *he*"——

"Why, he takes on about it, ma'am, certainly—but you see he's been so long expecting of it!"

"Do you think, Joseph," said Mrs Elliott hardly able to make herself heard—"that—that my father would be *very*—very angry—if he knew I was here—would he—see me?"

"Lord, ma'am!" exclaimed the porter, alarm overspreading his features. "It's not possible!—you can't think how stern he is! You should have heard what orders he gave us all about keeping you out of the house! I know 'tis a dreadful hard case, ma'am," he continued, wiping a tear from his eye, "and many, and many's the time we've all cried in the kitchen about—hush!" he stopped, and looked towards the stairs apprehensively—"never mind, ma'am—it's nobody!—But won't you come down and sit in the housekeeper's room? I'm sure the good old soul will rather like to see you than otherwise, and then, you know, you can slip out of the area gate and be gone in no time!"

"No, Joseph," replied Mrs Elliott, with as much energy as her weakness would admit of—"I will wait outside the street door if you think there is any danger—while you go and get this letter taken up-stairs, and say I am waiting for an answer!" He took the letter, held it in his hand hesitatingly—and shook his head.

"Oh, take it, good Joseph!" said Mrs Elliott, with a look that would have softened a heart of stone—"It is only to ask for mourning for my mother! I have no money to purchase any!" His eyes filled with tears.

"My poor dear young mistress!" he faltered—his lip quivered, and he paused—"It's more than my place is worth—but—I'll take it, nevertheless—that I will, come what will, ma'am! See if I don't! You see, ma'am," dropping his voice, and looking towards the staircase—"it isn't so much the old gentleman, after all, neither—but it's—it's—Miss Gubbley that I'm afraid of!—It is she, in my mind, that keeps him so cruel hard against you! She has it all her own way here! You should see how she orders us servants about, ma'am, and has her eyes into everything that's going on; she's like an old ferret. But—I'll go and take the letter any how—and don't

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you go out of doors, unless you hear me cry—'Hem!' on the stairs!" She promised to attend to this hint, as did also the female servant whom he left with her, and Joseph disappeared. The mention of Miss Gubbley excited the most painful and disheartening thoughts in the mind of Mrs Elliott. Possibly it was now the design of this woman to strike a grand blow—and force herself into the place so recently vacated by poor Mrs Hillary! Mrs Elliott's heart beat fast, after she had waited for some minutes in agonising anxiety and suspense, as she heard the footsteps of Joseph hastily descending the stairs.

"Well, Joseph?"—she whispered, looking eagerly at him.

"I can't get to see master, ma'am, though I've tried—I have indeed, ma'am! I thought it would be so! Miss Gubbley has been giving it me, ma'am—she says it will cost me my place to dare to do such an *oudacious* thing again; and I told her you was below here, ma'am, and she might see you—but she tossed her head, and said it was of a piece with all your other shameful behaviour to your poor, broken-hearted father—she did, ma'am"—Mrs Elliott began to sob bitterly—"and she wouldn't on any account whatsoever have him shocked at such a sad time as this—and that she knows it would be no use your coming"—his voice quivered—"and she says, as how"—he could hardly go on—"you should have thought of all this long ago,—and that only a month ago she heard master say it was all your own fault if you came to ruin—and as you'd made your bed you must lie on it—her very words, ma'am—but she's sent you a couple of guineas, ma'am, on condition that you don't on no account trouble master again—and—and—" he continued, his tears overflowing, "I've been so bold as to make it *three*, ma'am—and I hope it's no offence ma'am, me being but a servant," trying to force something wrapped up in paper into the hand of Mrs Elliott, who had listened motionless and in dead silence to all he had been saying.

"Joseph!"—at length she exclaimed, in a very low but distinct and solemn tone, stretching out her hands—"if you do not wish to see me die—help me, help me—to my knees!" And with his assistance, and that of the female servant, she sank gently down upon her knees upon the floor, where he partly supported her. She slowly clasped her hands together upon her bosom, and looked upwards—her eye was tearless, and an awful expression settled upon her motionless features. Joseph involuntarily fell upon his knees beside her, shaking like an aspen leaf—his eyes fixed instinctively upon hers—and the sobs of several of the servants, who had stolen silently to the top of the kitchen stairs, to gaze at this strange scene, were the only sounds that were audible. After having remained in this position for some moments, she rose from her knees slowly and in silence.

"When will my mother be buried?" she presently inquired.

"Next Saturday," whispered Joseph, "at two o'clock."

"Where?"

"At St ——'s, ma'am."

"Farewell, Joseph! You have been very kind," said she, rising and moving slowly to the door.

"Won't you let me get you a little of something warm, ma'am? You do look so bad, ma'am—so pale—and I'll fetch it from down stairs in half a minute."

"No, Joseph—I am better!—and Mr Elliott is waiting for me at the outside."

"Poor gentleman!" sobbed Joseph, turning his head aside, that he might dash a tear from his eye. He strove again to force into her hand the paper containing the three guineas, but she refused.

"No, Joseph—I am very destitute, but yet—Providence will not let me starve. I cannot take it from *you;* hers I will not—I ought not!"

With this the door was opened; and with a firmer step than she had entered the house, she quitted it. Her husband, who was standing anxiously at one or two doors' distance, rushed up to her, and with tremulous and agitated tone

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and gestures inquired the result of her application, and placing his arm around her—for he felt how heavily she leaned against him—gently led her towards home. He listened with the calmness of despair to her narrative of what had taken place. "Then there is no hope for us THERE," he muttered through his half-closed lips.

"But there *is* hope, dearest, with Him who invites the weary and heavy-laden—who seems to have withdrawn from us, but has not forsaken us," replied his wife tenderly, and with unwonted cheerfulness in her manner—"I feel—I know—HE tells me that He will not suffer us to sink in the deep waters! He heard my prayer, Henry—and He will answer it, wisely and well! But let us hasten home, dearest. Our little Henry will be uneasy, and trouble Mrs ——. Come, love!" Elliott listened to her in moody silence. His darkening features told not of the peace and resignation Heaven had shed into the troubled bosom of his wife, but too truly betokened the gloom and despair within. He suspected that his wife's reason was yielding to the long-continued assaults of sorrow; and thought of her approaching sufferings with an involuntary shudder, and sickened as he entered the scene of them—his wretched lodgings. She clasped their smiling child with cheerful affection to her bosom; *he* kissed him—but coldly—absently—as it were mechanically. Placing upon his forehead the silk shade which my wife had sent to him, at my request, the day before—as well to relieve his eyes, as to conceal their troubled expression—he leaned against the table at which he took his seat, and thought with perfect horror upon their circumstances.

Scarce £20 now remained of the £600 with which they were married; his wife's little earnings were to be of course for a while suspended; he was prohibited, at the peril of blindness, from the only species of employment he could obtain; the last ray of hope concerning Hillary's reconciliation was extinguished;—and all this when their expenses were on the eve of being doubled—or trebled—when illness—or death—

It was well for Mrs Elliott that her husband had placed that silk shade upon his forehead!

During his absence the next morning at the Ophthalmic Infirmary, whither, at my desire, he went twice a-week to receive the advice of Mr ——, the eminent oculist, I called, and seized the opportunity of placing in Mrs Elliott's hands, with unspeakable satisfaction, the sum of £40, which my good wife had chiefly collected among her friends; and as Mrs Elliott read, or rather attempted to read, for her eyes were filled with tears, the affectionate note written to her by my wife, who begged that she would send her little boy to our house till she should have recovered from her confinement, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed—"Has not God heard my prayers!—Dearest doctor! Heaven will reward you! What news for my poor heart-broken husband when he returns home from the Infirmary—weary and disheartened!

* * * *

"And now, doctor, shall I confide to you a plan I have formed?" said Mrs Elliott, looking earnestly at me—"Don't try to persuade me against putting it into practice; for my mind is made up, and nothing can turn me from my purpose." I looked at her with surprise. "You know we have but this one room and the little closet—for what else is it?—where we sleep; and where must my husband and child be when I am confined? Besides, we cannot, even with all your noble kindness to us, afford to have proper—the most ordinary attendance." She paused—I listened anxiously.

"So—I've been thinking—could you not"——she hesitated, struggling with violent emotion—"could you not get me admitted"—her voice trembled—"into—the Lying-in Hospital?"—I shook my head, unable at the moment to find utterance.

"It has cost me a struggle—Providence seems, however, to have led me



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to the thought! I shall there be no expense to my husband—and shall have, I understand, excellent attendance."

"My poor dear madam," I faltered, "you must forgive me—but I cannot bear to think of it."—In spite of my struggles, the swelling tears at length burst from my laden eyes. She buried her face in her handkerchief, and wept bitterly. "My husband can hear of me every day, and, with God's blessing upon us, perhaps in a month's time, we may both meet in better health and spirits. And if—if—*if* it would not inconvenience Mrs —— or yourself, to let my little Henry"—she could get no further, and burst again into a fit of passionate weeping. I promised her, in answer to her reiterated entreaties, after many remonstrances, that I would immediately take steps to insure her an admission into the Lying-in Hospital at any moment she might require it.

"But, my dear madam—your husband—Mr Elliott—depend upon it he will never hear of all this—he will never permit it—I feel perfectly certain."

"Ah, doctor—I know he would not; but he shall not know anything about my intentions till I am safely lodged in the—the hospital. I intend to leave without his knowing where I am gone, some day this week—for I feel satisfied"—she paused and trembled—"when he returns from the Infirmary on Friday he will find a letter from me, telling him all my little scheme, and may God incline him to forgive me for what I am doing. I know he loves me, however, too fondly to make me unhappy!"

The next morning, my wife accompanied me to their lodgings, for the purpose of taking home with her little Elliott. A sad scene it was—but Elliott, whom his wife had easily satisfied of the prudence of thus disposing of the child during the period of her confinement, bore it manfully. He carried the child down to my carriage, and resigned him into the hands of my wife and servant, after many fond caresses, with an air of melancholy resolution; promising to call daily and see him while on his visit at my house. I strove to console him under this temporary separation from his child, and to impress upon him the necessity of absolute quiet and repose, in order to give due effect to the very active treatment under which he had been placed for the complaint in his eyes; this I did in order to prepare him for the second stroke meditated to be inflicted upon him on the ensuing Friday by his wife, and to reconcile him, by anticipation as it were, to their brief separation. When once the decisive step had been taken, I felt satisfied that he would speedily see the propriety of it.

It was wonderful to see how Mrs Elliott, during the interval between this day, and the Friday appointed for her entrance into the Lying-in Hospital, sustained her spirits. Her manner increased in tenderness towards her husband, who evinced a corresponding energy of sympathy and affection towards her. His anxieties had been to a considerable extent allayed by the seasonable addition to his funds already spoken of; but he expressed an occasional surprise at the absence of any preparations for the event, which both of them believed to be so near at hand.

On the Friday morning, about half an hour after her husband had set out for the Ophthalmic Infirmary as usual, a hackney coach drew up to the door of his lodgings, with a female attendant, sent by my directions from the Lying-in Hospital. I also made my appearance within a few minutes of the arrival of the coach; and poor Mrs Elliott, after having carefully arranged and disposed of the few articles of her own apparel which she intended to leave behind her, and given the most anxious and repeated instructions to the woman of the house to be attentive to Mr Elliott in her absence—sat down and shed many tears as she laid upon the table a letter, carefully sealed, and addressed to her husband, containing the information of her departure and destination. When her agitation had somewhat subsided, she left

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the room—perhaps she felt, *for ever*—entered into the coach, and was soon safely lodged in the Lying-in Hospital.

The letter to her husband was as follows—for the melancholy events which will presently be narrated brought this with other documents into my possession :—

"My Sweet Love,

"The hour of my agony is approaching; and Providence has pointed out to me a place of refuge. I cannot, dearest Henry—I cannot think of adding to your sufferings by the sight of mine! When all is over—as I trust it will be soon, and happily—then we shall be reunited, and God grant us happier days! Oh, do not be grieved or angry, Henry, at the step I am taking! I have done it for the best—it will be for the best, depend upon it. Dr —— will tell you how skilfully and kindly they treat their patients at the Lying-in Hospital, to which I am going. Oh, Henry! you are the delight of my soul! the more grief and bitterness we have seen together, surely the more do we love one another. *Oh, how I love you!* How I prayed in the night while you, dearest, were sleeping—that the Almighty would bless you and our little Harry, and be merciful to *me*, for your sakes, and bring us all together again! I shall pray for you, my love—my own love! every hour that we are away! Bear up a little longer, Henry! God has not deserted us—he will not—he cannot, if we do not desert him. I leave you, dearest, my Bible and Prayer-book—*oh, do read them!* Kiss my little Harry in my name, every day. How kind are Dr —— and Mrs ——! Go out and enjoy the fresh air, and do not sit fretting at home, love, nor try your eyes with reading or writing till I come back. I can hardly lay by my pen, but the coach is come for me, and I must tear myself away. Farewell, then, my dear, dear, darling Henry; but only for a little while. Your doating wife, Mary.

"P.S.—The socks I have been knitting for Harry are in the drawer near the window. You had better take them to Dr ——'s to-morrow, as I forgot to send them with Harry in the bustle of his going, and he will want them. Dr —— says you can come and see me every day before I am taken ill. Do come."

I called in the evening, according to the promise I had made to Mrs Elliott, on her husband, to see how he bore the discovery of his wife's sudden departure.

"How is Mr Elliott?" I inquired of the woman of the house, who opened the door.—"Is he at home?"

"Why, yes; but he's in a sad way, sir, indeed, about Mrs Elliott's going. He's eaten nothing all day."

He was sitting at a table when I entered, with a solitary candle, and Mrs Elliott's letter lying open before him.

"Oh! doctor, is not this worse than death?" he exclaimed. "Am I not left alone to be the prey of Satan?"

"Come, come, Mr Elliott, moderate your feelings! Learn the lesson your incomparable wife has taught you—patience and resignation."

"It is a heavenly lesson. But can a fiend learn it?" he replied vehemently, in a tone and with an air that quite startled me. "Here I am left alone by God and man to be the sport of devils, and I am!—What curse is there that has not fallen, or is falling, upon me? I feel assured," he continued gloomily, "that my Mary is taken from me for ever. Oh, do not tell me otherwise! I feel—I know it! I shall never see her again! I shall never hear her blessed voice again! I have brought ruin upon her! I have brought her to beggary by an insane, a wicked attachment! The curses of disobedience to parents are upon both of us! Yet our misery might have touched any heart except that of her fiendish father. Ah! he buries her mother to-morrow! To-morrow, then, I will be there! The earth shall not fall upon her before he looks upon me! How I will make the old man shake beside the grave he must soon drop into!"—He drew a long breath—"Let him curse me!—Curse her—Curse us

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both!—Curse our child! Then and there!" ——

"*The curse causeless shall not come,*" I interrupted.

"Ay, causeless! That's the thing! Causeless!" He paused. "Forgive me," he added, after a heavy sigh, resuming his usual manner: "doctor, I've been *raving*, and can you wonder at it? Poor Mary's letter (here it is) has almost killed me! I have been to the place where she is, but I dare not go in to see her. Oh! doctor, *will* she be taken care of?" suddenly seizing my hand with convulsive energy.

"The very greatest care will be taken of her—the greatest skill in London will be instantly at her command in case of the slightest necessity for it—as well as every possible comfort and convenience that her situation can require. If it will be any consolation to you, I assure you I intend visiting her myself every day."—And by these means I at length succeeded in restoring something like calmness to him. The excitement occasioned by his unexpected discovery of his wife's absence, and its touching reason, had been aggravated by the unfavourable opinion concerning his sight which had been that morning expressed — alas, I feared, but too justly!—by the able and experienced oculist under whose care he was placed. He had in much alarm heard Mr —— ask him several questions respecting peculiar and secret symptoms and sensations about his eyes, which he was forced to answer in the affirmative; and the alarming effect of these inquiries was not dissipated by the cautious replies of Mr —— to his questions as to the chances of ultimate recovery. I assured him that nothing on earth could so effectually serve him as the cultivation of calm and composed habits of mind; for that the affection of his eyes depended almost entirely upon the condition of his nervous system. I got him to promise me that he would abandon his wild and useless purpose of attending the funeral of Mrs Hillary—said I would call upon him, accompanied by his little son, about noon the next day, and also bring him tidings concerning Mrs Elliott.

I was as good as my word; but not he. The woman of the house told me that he had left home about twelve o'clock, and did not say when he would return. He had gone to St ——'s Church, as I afterwards learned from him. He watched the funeral procession into the church, and placed himself in a pew which commanded a near view of that occupied by the chief mourner, Mr Hillary; who, however, never once raised his head from the handkerchief in which his countenance was buried. When the body was borne to the grave, Elliott followed, and took his place beside the grave as near Mr Hillary as the attendants and the crowd would admit of. He several times formed the determination to interrupt the service by a solemn and public appeal to Hillary on the subject of his deserted daughter—but his tongue failed him, his feelings overpowered him; and he staggered from where he stood to an adjoining tombstone, which he leaned against till the brief and solemn scene was concluded, and the mourners began to return. Once more, with desperate purpose, he approached the procession, and came up to Mr Hillary just as he was being assisted into the coach.

"Look at me, sir!" said he, suddenly tapping Mr Hillary upon the shoulder. The old man seemed paralysed for a moment, and stared at him as if he did not know the strange intruder.

"My name is Elliott, sir—your forsaken daughter is my heart-broken—starving wife! Do you relent, sir?"

"Elliott!—Keep him away—keep him away, for God's sake!" exclaimed Mr Hillary, his face full of disgust and horror; and the attendants violently dragged the intruder from the spot where he was standing, and kept him at a distance till the coach containing Mr Hillary had driven off. Elliott then returned home, which he reached about an hour after I had called. He paid me a visit in the evening, and I was glad to see him so much calmer than I had expected. He apologised

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with much earnestness for his breach of faith. He said he had found it impossible to resist the impulse which led him, in spite of all he had said over-night, to attend the funeral; for he had persuaded himself of the more than possibility that his sudden and startling appearance at so solemn a moment might effect an alteration in Mr Hillary's' feelings towards him. He gave me a full account of what had happened, and assured me, with a melancholy air, that he had now satisfied himself—that he had nothing to hope for further—nothing to disturb him—and he would attend to my injunctions and those of his surgical adviser at the Infirmary. He told me that he had seen Mrs Elliott about an hour before, and had left her in comparatively good spirits—but the people of the hospital had told him that her confinement was hourly expected.

"I wonder," said he, and sighed profoundly—"what effect her death would have upon Mr Hillary? Would he cast off her children—as he has cast her off? Would his hatred follow her into the grave? Now, what should *you say*, doctor?"

The matter-of-fact, not to say indifferent air with which this very grave question was put, not a little surprised me. "Why, he must be obdurate indeed if such were to be the case"—I answered. "I am in hopes, however, that in spite of all that has happened, he will ere long be brought to a sense of his guilt and cruelty in so long defying the dictates of conscience—the voice of nature.—When he finds himself *alone*"——

Elliott shook his head.

"It must be a thundering blow, doctor, that would make HIS iron heart feel—and—that blow"—he sighed—"may come much sooner, it may be"—— he shuddered, and looked at me with a wild air of apprehension.

"Let us hope for the best, however, Mr Elliott! Rely upon it, the present calmness of your inestimable wife affords grounds for the happiest expectations concerning the approaching"——

"Ah! I hope you may not be mistaken! Her former accouchement was a long and dangerous one."

"Perhaps the very reason why her present may be an easy one!" He looked at me mournfully.

"And suppose it to be so—what a home has the poor creature to return to after her suffering! Is not *that* a dreary prospect?"

It was growing late, however, and presently taking an affectionate leave of his son, who had been sitting all the while on his knee overpowered with drowsiness, he left.

Mrs Elliott was taken ill on Sunday about midnight; and after a somewhat severe and protracted labour was delivered on Monday evening of a child that died a few minutes after its birth. Having directed the people at the hospital to summon me directly Mrs Elliott was taken ill, I was in attendance upon her within an hour after her illness had commenced. I sent a messenger on Monday morning to Mr Elliott, according to the promise I had given him immediately to send him the earliest information, with an entreaty that he would remain at home all day, to be in readiness to receive a visit from me. He came down, however, to the hospital almost immediately after receiving my message; and walked to and fro before the institution, making anxious inquiries every ten minutes or quarter of an hour how his wife went on, and received ready and often encouraging answers. When I quitted her for the night, about an hour after delivery, leaving her much exhausted, but, as I too confidently supposed, out of danger, I earnestly entreated Mr Elliott, who continued before the gates of the hospital in a state of the highest excitement, to return home—but in vain; and I left him with expressions of severe displeasure, assuring him that his conduct was absurd and useless—nay, criminally dangerous to himself. "What will become of your sight, Mr Elliott—pray think of *that!*—if you will persist in working yourself up to this dreadful pitch of nervous excitement? I do assure you that you are doing yourself every hour mischief which—which it

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may require months, if not years, to remedy; and is it kind to her you love—to those whom you ought to consult—whose interests are dependent upon yourself—thus to throw away the chances of recovery? Pray, Mr Elliott, listen, listen to reason, and return home!" He made me no reply, but wept, and I left, hoping that what I had said would soon produce the desired effect.

About four o'clock in the morning, I was awoke by a violent ringing of the bell and knocking at the door; and, on hastily looking out of the bedroom window, beheld Mr Elliott.

"What is the matter there?" I inquired. "Is it you, Mr Elliott?"

"Oh doctor, doctor—for God's sake come!—My wife, my wife! She's dying! They have told me so! Come, doctor, oh, come!" Though I had been exceedingly fatigued with the labours of the preceding day, this startling summons soon dissipated my drowsiness, and in less than five minutes I was by his side. We ran almost all the way to the nearest coach-stand: and on reaching the hospital, found that there existed but too much ground for apprehension; for about two o'clock very alarming symptoms of profuse hæmorrhage made their appearance; and when I reached her bedside, a little after four o'clock, I saw, in common with the experienced resident accoucheur, who was also present, that her life was indeed trembling in the balance. While I sat watching, with feelings of melancholy interest and alarm, her snowy inanimate countenance, a tap on my shoulder from one of the female attendants attracted my eye to the door, where the chief matron of the establishment was standing. She beckoned me out of the room; and I noiselessly stepped out after her.

"The husband of this poor lady," said Mrs ——, "is in a dreadful state, doctor, in the street. The porter has sent up word that he fears the gentleman is going mad, and will be attempting to break open the gates—that he insists upon being shown at once into his wife's room, or at least within the house! Pray oblige me, doctor, by going down and trying to pacify him! This will never do, you know—the other patients"—I hastened down stairs, and stepped quickly across the yard. My heart yearned towards the poor distracted being who stood outside the iron gates, with his arms stretched towards me through the bars.

"Oh say, is she alive! Is she alive?" he cried with a lamentable voice.

"She *is*, Mr Elliott—but really"——

"Oh, *is* she alive? Are you telling me truly? Is she indeed alive?"

"Yes, yes, Mr Elliott—but if you don't cease to make such a dreadful disturbance, your voice may reach her ear—and that would be instant death—indeed it would."

"I will! I will—but is she indeed alive? Don't deceive me!"

"This is the way he's been going on all night;" whispered the watchman, who had just stepped up.

"Mr Elliott, I tell you truly, in the name of God, your wife is living—and I have not given up hope of her recovery."

"Oh, Mary! Mary! Mary! Oh, come to me, my Mary! You said that you would return to me."

"Hadn't I better take him away, sir?" said the watchman. "The porter says he'll be wakening all the women in the hospital—shall I?"

"Let me stay—let me stay! I'll give you all I have in the world! I'll give you forty pounds—I will—I will,"—cried the unfortunate husband, clinging to the bars, and looking imploringly at me.

"Do not interfere—do not touch him, sir," said I to the watchman.

"Thank you! God bless you!"—gasped the wretched sufferer, extending his hands towards mine, and wringing them convulsively; then turning to the watchman, he added, in a lower tone, the most piteous I ever heard—"Don't take me away! My wife is here; she's dying—I *can't* go away—but I'll not make any more noise!—Hush! hush! there is some one coming!"—A person approached from within the building, and whispering a few hurried words in my ear, retired.

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"Mr Elliott, shake hands with me," said I; "Mrs Elliott is reviving! I told you I had hope!—The accoucheur has this instant sent me word that he thinks the case is taking a favourable turn."—He sunk down suddenly on his knees in silence; then grasped my hands through the bars, and shook them convulsively. In the fervour of his frantic feeling, he turned to the watchman, grasped his hands, and shook them.

"Hush! hush!" he gasped—"Don't speak! It will disturb her!—A single sound may kill her!—Ah!" —— he looked with agonised apprehension at the mail-coach which that moment rattled rapidly and loudly by. At length he became so much calmer, that after pledging myself to return to him shortly, especially if any unfavourable change should take place, I withdrew, and repaired to the chamber where lay the poor unconscious creature—the subject of her husband's wild and dreadful anxieties. I found that I had not been misinformed; and though Mrs Elliott lay in the most precarious situation possible—with no sign of life in her pallid countenance, and no pulse discernible at her wrist, we had reason for believing that a favourable change had taken place. After remaining in silence by her side for about a quarter of an hour, during which she seemed asleep, I took my departure, and conveyed the delightful intelligence to the poor sufferer without, that his hopes were justified by the situation in which I had left my sweet patient. I succeeded in persuading him to accompany me home, and restoring him to a little composure; but the instant that he had swallowed a hasty cup of coffee, without waiting even to see his little boy, who was being dressed to come down as usual to breakfast, he left the house and returned to the hospital, where I found him, as before, on driving up about twelve o'clock, but walking calmly to and fro before the gates. What anguish was written in his features! But a smile passed over them—a joyful air, as he told me, before I could quit my carriage, that all was still going on well. It was so, I ascertained; and, on returning from the hospital, I almost forced him into my carriage, and drove off to his lodgings, where I stayed till he had got into bed, and had solemnly promised me to remain there till I called in the evening.

For three days Mrs Elliott continued in the most critical circumstances, during which her husband was almost every other hour at the hospital, and at length so wearied every one with his anxious and incessant inquiries, that they would hardly give him civil answers any longer. Had I not twice bled him with my own hand, and myself administered to him soothing and lowering medicines, he would certainly, I think, have gone raving mad. On the fifth day Mrs Elliott was pronounced out of danger, but continued, of course, in a very exhausted state. Her first inquiries were about her husband, then her little Henry; and on receiving a satisfactory answer, a sweet sad smile stole over her features, and her feeble fingers gently compressed mine. Before I quitted her, she asked whether her husband might be permitted to see her—I of course answered in the negative. A tear stole down her cheek, but she did not attempt to utter a syllable.

The pressure of professional engagements did not admit of my seeing Mr Elliott more than once or twice during the next week. I frequently heard of him, however, at the hospital, where he called constantly three times a-day, but had not yet been permitted to see Mrs Elliott, who was considered, and in my opinion justly, unequal to the excitement of such an interview.

The dreadful mental agony in which he had spent the last fortnight, was calculated to produce the most fatal effects upon his eyesight—of which, indeed, he seemed himself but too conscious! for every symptom of which he had complained was most fearfully aggravated. Nevertheless, I could not prevail upon him—at least, he said, for the present—to continue his visits to the Eye Infirmary. He said, with

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a melancholy air, that he had too many, and very different matters to attend to—and he must postpone, for the present, all attention to his own complaints. Alas! he *had* many other subjects of anxiety than his own ailments! Supposing his poor wife to be restored to him, even in a moderate degree of strength and convalescence—what prospect was before them? What means remained of obtaining a livelihood? What chance was there of her inexorable old father changing his fell purpose? Was his wife then to quit the scene of her almost mortal sufferings, only to perish before his eyes—of want—and her father wallowing in wealth?—the thought was horrible! Elliott sat at home alone, thinking of these things, and shuddered; he quitted his home, and wandered through the streets with vacant eye and blighted heart.—*He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.**

*Friday.*—This morning my wife called, at my suggestion, to see Mrs Elliott, accompanied by her little boy, whom I had perceived she was pining to see. I thought they might meet without affording ground for uneasiness as to the result.

"My little Harry!" exclaimed a low soft voice as my wife and child were silently ushered into the room where lay Mrs Elliott, wasted almost to a shadow, her face and hands—said my wife—white as the lily. "Come, love—kiss me!" she faintly murmured; and my wife brought the child to the bedside, and lifting him upon her knee, inclined his face towards his mother. She feebly placed her arm around his neck, and pressed him to her bosom.

"Let me see his face!" she whispered, removing her arm.

She gazed tenderly at him for some minutes; the child looking first at her and then at my wife with mingled fear and surprise.

"*How like his father!*" she murmured—"kiss me again, love! Don't be afraid of your poor mother, Harry!" Her eyes filled with tears. "Am I so altered?" said she to my wife, who stammered Yes and No in one breath.

"Has he been a good boy?"

"Very—very"—replied my wife, turning aside her head, unable for a moment to look either mother or son in the face. Mrs Elliott perceived my wife's emotion, and her chill fingers gently grasped her hand.

"Does he say his prayers?—you've not forgotten *that*, Harry?"

The child, whose little breast was beginning to heave, shook his head, and lisped a faint—"No, mamma!"

"God bless thee, my darling!" exclaimed his mother in a low tone, closing her eyes—"He will not desert thee—nor thy parents!—*He feeds the young ravens when they cry!*" She paused, and the tears trembled through her almost transparent eyelids. My wife, who had with the utmost difficulty restrained her feelings, leaned over the poor sufferer, pressed her lips to her forehead, and gently taking the child with her, stepped hastily from the room. As soon as they had got into the matron's parlour, where my wife sat down for a few moments, her little companion burst into tears, and cried as if his heart would break. The matron tried to pacify him, but in vain. "I hope, ma'am," said she to my wife, "he did not cry in this way before his mother? Dr —— and Mr —— both say that she must not be agitated in any way, or they will not answer for the consequences." At this moment I made my appearance, having called, in passing, to pay a visit to Mrs Elliott; but, hearing how much her late interview had overcome her, I left, taking my wife and little Elliott—still sobbing—with me, and promising to look in, if possible, in the evening. I did do so, accordingly; and found her happily none the worse for the emotion occasioned by her first interview with her child since her illness. She expressed herself very grateful to me for the care which she said we had evidently taken of him—

* Job, xv. 23.

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"and how like he grows to his poor father!"—she added. "Oh! doctor, when may I see *him?* Do, dear doctor, let us meet, if it be but for a moment! Oh, how I long to see him! I will not be agitated! It will do me more good than all the medicine in this building!"

"In a few days' time, my dear madam, I assure you"——

"Why not to-morrow?—oh, if you knew the good that one look of his would do me—he does not look ill?" she inquired suddenly.

"He—he looks certainly rather harassed on your account; but, in other respects, he is"——

"Promise me—let me see for myself; oh, bring him with you!—I—I—I own I could not bear to see him *alone*—but in *your* presence—do, dear doctor! promise!—I shall sleep so sweetly to-night if you will."

Her looks—her tender murmuring voice, overcame me; and I promised to bring Mr Elliott with me some time on the morrow. I bade her good-night.

"Remember, doctor!" she whispered, as I rose to go.

"I will!"—said I, and quitted the room, already almost repenting of the rash promise I had made. But who could have resisted her?

Sweet soul! what was to become of thee? Bred up in the lap of luxury, and accustomed to have every wish gratified, every want anticipated—what kind of scene awaited thee on returning to thy humble lodgings—

> Where hopeless Anguish pours her groan,
> And lonely Want retires to die?

For was it not so? What miracle was to save them from starvation? Full of such melancholy reflections, I walked home, resolving to leave no stone unturned in their behalf, and pledging myself and wife that the forty pounds we had already collected for the Elliotts, from among our benevolent friends, should be raised to a hundred, however great might be the deficiency we made up ourselves!

*Saturday.*—I was preparing to pay some early visits to distant patients, and arranging so as to take Mr Elliott with me on my return, which I calculated would be about two o'clock, to pay the promised visit to Mrs Elliott—when my servant brought me a handful of letters which had that moment been left by the twopenny postman. I was going to cram them all into my pocket, and read them in the carriage, when my eye was attracted by one of them much larger than the rest, sealed with a black seal, and the address in Mr Elliott's handwriting. I instantly resumed my seat; and, placing the other letters in my pocket, proceeded to break the seal with some trepidation—which increased to a sickening degree when four letters fell out, all of them sealed with black, in Mr Elliott's handwriting, and addressed respectively to—"Jacob Hillary, Esq."—"Mrs Elliott"—"Henry Elliott," and "Dr ——" (myself.) I sat for a minute or two, with this terrible array before me, scarce daring to breathe, or to trust myself with my thoughts, when my wife entered, leading in her constant companion, little Elliott, to take their leave, as usual, before I set out for the day. The sight of "Henry Elliott," to whom one of these portentous letters was addressed, overpowered me. My wife, seeing me discomposed, was beginning to inquire the reason, when I rose, and with gentle force put her out of the room and bolted the door, hurriedly telling her that I had just received unpleasant accounts concerning one or two of my patients. With trembling hands I opened the letter which was addressed to me, and read with infinite consternation as follows:—

"When you are reading these few lines, kind doctor! I shall be sweetly sleeping the sleep of death. All will be over; and there will be one wretch the less upon the earth.

"God, before whom I shall be standing face to face, while you read this letter, will, I hope, have mercy upon me, and forgive me for appearing before Him uncalled for. Amen!

"But I could not live. I felt blind-

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ness—the last curse—descending upon me—blindness and beggary. I saw my wife broken-hearted. Nothing but misery and starvation before her and her child.

"Oh, has she not loved me with a noble love? And yet it is thus I leave her! But she knows how through life I have returned her love, and she will hereafter find that love alone led me to take this dreadful step.

"Grievous has been the misery she has borne for my sake. I thought, in marrying her, that I might have overcome the difficulties which threatened us—that I might have struggled successfully at least for our bread; but He ordered otherwise, and *it has been in vain for me to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.*

"Why did I leave life? Because I know, as if a voice from heaven had told me, that my death will reconcile my Mary and her father. It is me alone whom he hates, and her only on my account. When I shall be gone, he will receive her to his arms, and she and my son will be happy.

"Oh, my God! that I shall never see her face again, or——But presently she will look at our son, and she will revive.

"I entreat you, as in the name of the dead—it is a voice from the grave—to be yourself the bearer of this news to my suffering wife, when, and as you may think fit. Give her this letter, and also give, yourself, to Mr Hillary the letter which bears his dreadful name upon it. I know, I feel, that it will open his heart, and he will receive them to his arms.

"I have written also a few lines to my son. Ah, my boy, your father will be mouldered into dust before you will understand what I have written! Grieve for your unfortunate father, but do not—disown him!

"As for you, best of men, my only *friend*, farewell! Forgive all the trouble I have given. God reward you! You will be in my latest thoughts. I have written to you last.

"Now I have done. I am calm; the bitterness of death is past. Farewell! The grave—the darkness of death is upon my soul—but I have no fear. To-night, before this candle shall have burnt out—at midnight——Oh, Mary! Henry!—Shall we ever meet again!

"H. E."

I read this letter over half-a-dozen times, for every paragraph pushed the preceding one out of my memory. Then I took up mechanically and opened the letter addressed to his son. It contained a large lock of his father's hair, and the following verses,* written in a large straggling hand:—

"*I have wished for death: wherefore do I not call for my son?*"

"*My son, when I am dead, bury me; and despise not thy mother, but honour her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not.*

"*Remember, my son, that she saw many dangers for thee, when thou wast in her womb; and when she is dead, bury her by me in one grave.*

"Thus, on the point of death, writes thy father to his beloved son. Remember! Henry Elliott."

As soon as I had somewhat recovered the shock occasioned by the perusal of these letters, I folded them all up, stepped hastily into my carriage, and postponing all my other visits, drove off direct to the lodgings of Mr Elliott. The woman of the house was standing at the door, talking earnestly with one or two persons.

"Where is Mr Elliott?" I inquired, leaping out of the carriage.

"That's what we want to know, sir," replied the woman, very pale. "He must have gone out late last night, sir—and hasn't been back since; for when I looked into his room this morning to ask about breakfast, it was empty."

"Did you observe anything particular in his appearance last night?" I inquired, preparing to ascend the little staircase.

* From the Apocrypha. Tobit, ch. iv. 2, 3, 4.

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"Yes, sir, very wild-like! And about eight or nine o'clock, he comes to the top of the stairs, and calls out, 'Mrs ——, did you hear that noise? Didn't you see something?' 'Lord, sir,' said I, in a taking, he spoke so sudden, 'no! there wa'n't no sight nor sound whatsoever!'—so he went into his room, and shut the door, and I never seed him since."

I hastened to his room. A candlestick, its candle burnt down to the socket, stood on the little table at which he generally sat, together with a pen or two, an inkstand, black wax, a sheet of paper, and a Bible open at the place from which he had copied the words addressed to his son. The room was apparently just as its unfortunate and frantic occupant had quitted it. I opened the table-drawer; it was full of paper which had been covered with writing, and was now torn into small fragments. One half-sheet was left, full of strange incoherent expressions, apparently forming part of a prayer, and evincing, alas! how fearfully the writer's reason was disturbed! But where was poor Elliott? What mode of death had he selected?

At first I thought of instantly advertising and describing his person, and issuing handbills about the neighbourhood; but ultimately determined to wait till the Monday's newspapers made their appearance—some one of which might contain intelligence concerning him which might direct my movements. And, in the mean time, how was I to appear before Mrs Elliott, and account for my not bringing her husband? I determined to send her a written excuse, on the score of pressing and unexpected engagements, but promising to call upon her either on Sunday or Monday. I resolved to do nothing rashly, for it glanced across my mind, as *possible*, that Elliott had not really carried into execution the dreadful intentions expressed in his letter to me, but had resorted to a stratagem only in order to terrify Mr Hillary into a reconciliation. This notion took such full possession of my heated imagination, that I at length lost sight of all the glaring improbabilities attending it. Alas, however, almost the first paragraph that fell under my hurried eye, in scanning over the papers of Monday, was the following:—

"On Saturday, about eight o'clock in the morning, some labourers discovered the body of a man of respectable appearance, apparently about thirty years old, floating, without a hat, in the New River. It was immediately taken out of the water, but life seemed to have been for some hours extinct. One or two letters were found upon his person, but the MS. too much spread and blotted with the water to afford any clue to the identity of the unfortunate person. The body lies at the Red Boar public-house, where a coroner's inquest is summoned for today at twelve o'clock."

I drove off to the place mentioned in the paragraph, and arrived there just as the jury was assembling. There was a considerable crowd about the doors. I sent in my card; and stating that I believed I could identify the body for which the inquest was summoned, I was allowed to view the corpse, and ushered at once into the room where it lay.

I wish Mr Hillary could have entered that room with me, and have stood beside me, as I stepped shudderingly forward, and perceived that I was looking upon—HIS VICTIM! The body lay with its wet clothes undisturbed, just as it had been taken out of the water. The damp hair, the eyes wide open, the hands clenched, as if with the agonies of death——

Here lay the husband of Mrs Elliott—the fond object of her unconquerable love! This was he to whom she had written so tenderly on quitting him! Here lay he whom she had so sweetly consoled by almost daily messages through me! This was he to whom, with a pious confidence, she had predicted her speedy and happy return! This was the father of the sweet boy who sat prattling at my table only that morning! This—wretch! monster! fiend! this is the body of him you flung, on an infamous

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charge, into the dungeons of Newgate! This is the figure of him that shall HEREAFTER——

I could bear it no longer, and rushed from the room in an agony! After drinking a glass of water, I recovered my self-possession sufficiently to make my appearance in the jury-room; where I deposed to such facts—carefully concealing only, for Mrs Elliott and her son's sake, the causes which led to the commission of the fatal act—as satisfied the jury that the deceased had destroyed himself while in a state of mental derangement; and they returned their verdict accordingly.

After directing the immediate removal of the body to the house where Mr Elliott had lodged—the scene of so many agonies—of such intense and undeserved misery—I drove off, and, though quite unequal to the task, hurried through my round of patients, anxious to be at leisure in the evening for the performance of the solemn—the terrible duty—imposed upon me by poor Elliott—the conveying his letter to Mr Hillary, and communicating at the same time, with all the energy in my power, the awful results of his cruel, his tyrannical, his unnatural conduct. How I prayed that God would give me power to shake that old man's guilty soul!

Our dinner was sent away that day almost untouched. My wife and I interchanged but few and melancholy words; our noisy, lively little guest was not present to disturb, by his innocent sallies, the mournful silence; for, unable to bear his presence, I had directed that he should not be brought down that day. I had written to Mrs Elliott a brief and hasty line, saying—that I had *just seen Mr Elliott!* but that it would be impossible for either of us to call upon her that day! adding, that I would certainly call upon her the day after—and—Heaven pardon the equivocation!—bring Mr Elliott, *if possible*, which I feared might be doubtful, as his eyes were under very active treatment.——

I have had to encounter in my time many, very many trying and terrible scenes; but I never approached any with so much apprehension and anxiety as the one now cast upon me. Fortifying myself with a few glasses of wine, I put poor Elliott's letter to Mr Hillary in my pocket-book, and drove off for —— Square. I reached the house about eight o'clock. My servant, by my direction, thundered impetuously at the door—a startling summons I intended it to be! The porter drew open the door almost before my servant had removed his hand from the knocker.

"Is Mr Hillary at home?" I inquired, stepping hurriedly from my carriage, with the fearful letter in my hand. "He is, sir," said the man with a flurried air—"But—he—he—does not receive company, sir, since my mistress's death."

"Take my card to him, sir. My name is Dr ——. I must see Mr Hillary instantly."

I waited in the hall for a few moments, and then received a message, requesting me to walk into the back drawing-room. There I saw Miss Gubbley alone, and dressed in deep mourning. What I had heard of this woman, inspired me with the utmost contempt and hatred for her. What a countenance! Meanness, malice, cunning, and sycophancy, seemed struggling for the ascendant in its expression.

"Pardon me, madam—my business," said I peremptorily, "is not with you, but with Mr Hillary. Him I must see, and immediately."

"Dr ——, what *is* the matter?" she inquired, with mingled anger and anxiety in her countenance.

"I have a communication, madam, for Mr Hillary's private ear—I *must* see him; I insist upon seeing him immediately."

"This is strange conduct, sir—really," said Miss Gubbley, in an impudent manner, but her features becoming every moment paler and paler. "Have you not already"——

I unceremoniously pushed the malignant little parasite aside, opened the folding-doors, and stepped instantly into the presence of the man

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I at once desired and dreaded to see. He sat on the sofa, in the attitude and with the expression of a man who had been suddenly aroused from sleep.

"Dr ——!" he exclaimed, with an astonished and angry air—"Your servant, doctor! What's the meaning of all this?"

"I am sorry to intrude upon you, Mr Hillary—especially after the unpleasant manner in which our acquaintance was terminated—but—I have a dreadful duty to perform"—pointing to the letter I held, and turning towards him its black seal. He saw it. He seemed rather startled or alarmed; motioned me with a quick anxious bow, to take a seat, and resumed his own. "Excuse me, Mr Hillary—but we must be *alone*," said I, pointing to Miss Gubbley, who had followed me with a suspicious and insolent air, exclaiming, as she stepped hastily towards Mr Hillary—"Don't suffer this conduct, sir! It's very incorrect—very, sir."

"We *must* be alone, sir," I repeated, calmly and peremptorily, "or I shall retire at once. You would never cease to repent *that*, sir:" and Mr Hillary, as if he had suddenly discovered some strange meaning in my eye, motioned the pertinacious intruder to the door, and she reluctantly obeyed. I drew my chair near Mr Hillary, who seemed, by this time, thoroughly alarmed.

"Will you read this letter, sir?" said I, handing it to him. He took it into his hand; looked first at the direction; then at the seal, and lastly at me, in silence.

"Do you know that handwriting, sir?" I inquired.

He stammered an answer in the negative.

"Look at it, sir, again. You ought to know it—you *must* know it well." He laid down the letter; fumbled in his waistcoat-pocket for his glasses; placed them with infinite trepidation upon his forehead, and again took the letter into his hands, which shook violently; and his sight was so confused with agitation, that I saw he could make nothing of it.

"It seems—it appears to be—a man's hand, sir. Whose is it? What is it about? What's the matter?" he exclaimed, looking at me over his glasses with a frightened stare.

"I have attended, sir, a coroner's inquest this morning"——The letter dropped instantly from Mr Hillary's shaking hand upon the floor; his lips slowly opened.

"The writer of that letter, sir, was found drowned on Saturday last," I continued slowly, looking steadfastly at him, and feeling myself grow paler every moment—"This day I saw the body—stretched upon a shutter at an inn. Oh, those awful eyes! That hair, matted and muddy! Those clenched hands—Horror filled my soul as I looked at all this, and thought of you."

His lips moved, he uttered a few unintelligible sounds, and his face, suddenly bedewed with perspiration, assumed one of the most ghastly expressions that a human countenance could exhibit. I remained silent, nor did he speak; but the big drops rolled from his forehead and fell upon the floor. In the pier-glass opposite, to which my eye was attracted by seeing some moving figure reflected in it, I beheld the figure of Miss Gubbley; who having been no doubt listening at the door, could no longer subdue her terrified curiosity, and stole into the room on tip-toe, and stood terror-stricken behind my chair. Her presence seemed to restore Mr Hillary to consciousness.

"Take her away—go away—go—go!" he murmured, and I led her, unresisting, from the room, and, to be secured from her further intrusion, bolted both the doors.

"You had better read the letter, sir," said I, with a deep sigh, resuming my seat; his eyes remained riveted on me.

"I—I—I—*cannot*, sir!" he stammered. A long pause ensued. "If—she—had but called"——he gasped, "but once—or sent—after her—her mother's death"——and with a long groan he leaned forward, and almost fell against me.

"She did call, sir. She came the

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day after her mother's death," said I, shaking my head sorrowfully.

"No, she didn't," he replied, suddenly looking at me with a stupefied air.

"Then her visit was cruelly *concealed* from you, sir. Poor creature, I know she called!"

He rose slowly from the prostrate posture in which he had remained for the last few moments, clenched his trembling fists, and shook them with impotent anger.

"Who—who," he muttered—"who dared—I—I—I'll ring the bell. I'll have all the"——

"Would you have really received her, then, sir, if you had known of her calling?"

His lips moved, he attempted in vain to utter an answer, and sobbed violently, covering his face with his hands.

"Come, Mr Hillary, I see," said I, in a somewhat milder manner, "that the feelings of a FATHER are not yet utterly extinguished"—he burst into vehement weeping—"and I hope that—that—you may live to repent what you have done; to redress the wrongs you have committed! Your poor persecuted daughter, Mr Hillary, is not dead." He uttered a sudden sharp cry that alarmed me; grasped my hands, and carrying them to his lips, kissed them in a kind of ecstasy.

"Tell me—say plainly—only say—that Mary is alive"——

"Well, then, sir, your daughter *is* alive, but"——

He fell upon his knees, and groaned, "Oh God, I thank thee! I thank thee! How I thank thee!"

I waited till he had in some measure recovered from the ecstasy of emotion into which my words had thrown him, and assisted in loosening his shirt-collar and neck-handkerchief, which seemed to oppress him.

"*Who*—then"—he stammered—"who was—*found drowned*—the coroner's inquest"——

"Her poor broken-hearted husband, sir, who will be buried at my expense in a day or two."

He covered his face again with his hands, and cried bitterly.

"This letter was written by him to you, sir; and he sent it to me only a few hours, it seems, before he destroyed himself, and commissioned me to deliver it to you. Is not his blood, sir, lying at your door?"

"Oh Lord, have mercy on me! Lord—Christ—forgive me! Lord, forgive a guilty old sinner," he groaned, sinking again on his knees, and wringing his hands. "I—I AM his murderer! I feel—I know it!"

"Shall I read to you, sir, his last words?" said I.

"Yes, but—they'll choke me. I can't bear them." He sunk back exhausted upon the sofa. I took up the letter, which had remained till then upon the floor since he had dropped it from his palsied grasp, and opening it, read with faltering accents the following:—

"For your poor dear daughter's sake, sir—who is now a widow and a beggar—abandon your fierce and cruel resentment. I know that I am the guilty cause of all her misery. I have suffered and paid the full penalty of my sin! And I am, when you read this, amongst the dead.

"Forgive me, father of my beloved and suffering wife! Forgive me, as I forgive you, in this solemn moment, from my heart, whatever wrongs you may have done me!

"Let my death knock loudly at your heart's door, so that it may open and take in my suffering—perishing Mary—YOUR Mary, and our unoffending little one! I know it will! Heaven tells me that my sacrifice is accepted! I die full of grief, but contented in the belief that all will be well with the dear ones I leave behind me. God incline your heart to mercy! Farewell! So prays your unhappy—guilty son-in-law,—HENRY ELLIOTT."

It was a long while before my emotion, almost blinding my eyes and choking my utterance, permitted me to conclude this melancholy letter. Mr Hillary sat all the while aghast.

"The gallows is too good for me!"

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he gasped; "oh, what a monster! what a wretch have I been! Ay, I'll surrender! I know I'm guilty! It's all my doing! I confess all! It was I—it was I put him in prison."—I looked darkly at him as he uttered these last words, and shook my head in silence.

"Ah! I see—I see you know it all! Come, then! Take me away! Away with me to Newgate. Anywhere you like. I'll plead guilty!" He attempted to rise, but sank back again into his seat.

"But—*where's Mary?*" he gasped.

"Alas," I replied, "she does not yet know that she is a widow! that her child is an orphan! She has herself, poor meek soul, been lying for many days at the gates of death, and even yet, her fate is more than doubtful!"

"Where is she? Oh, Lord, Lord! Let me know—tell me, or I shall die. Let me know where I may go and drop down at her feet, and ask her forgiveness!"

"She is in a common hospital, a lying-in hospital, sir, where she, a few days ago only, gave birth to a dead child, after enduring, for the whole time of her pregnancy, the greatest want and misery! She has worked her poor fingers to the bones, Mr Hillary—she has slaved like a common servant for her child, her husband, and herself, and yet she has hardly found bread for them!"

"Oh! stay, stay, doctor. A common hospital! My daughter—a common hospital!" repeated Mr Hillary, pressing his hand to his forehead, and staring vacantly at me.

"Yes, sir—a common hospital!—Where else could she go to? God be thanked, sir, for finding such resources, such places of refuge, for the poor and forsaken! She fled thither to escape starvation, and to avoid eating the bread scarce sufficient for her husband and her child! I have seen her enduring such misery as would have softened the heart of a fiend!—And, good God! how am I to tell her what has happened? How I shudder at the task her dead husband has imposed upon me!—*What* am I to say to her? Tell me, Mr Hillary, for I am confounded—I am in despair! How shall I break to her this frightful event?"—Mr Hillary groaned—"Pray, tell me, sir," I continued, with real sternness, "what am I to do? How am I to face your wretched daughter in the morning! She has been unable even to see her husband for a moment since her illness. How will she bear being told that she is NEVER to see him again? I shall be almost guilty of her murder!" I paused, greatly agitated.

"Tell her—tell her—conceal the death," he gasped; "and tell her first, that all's forgiven, if she'll accept my forgiveness, and forgive *me!* Tell her—be sure to tell her—that my whole fortune is hers and her child's.—Surely *that*——I will make my will afresh. Every halfpenny shall go to her and her child. It shall, so help me God!"

"Poor creature!" I exclaimed bitterly, "can money heal thy broken heart?" I paused. "You may relent, Mr Hillary, and receive your unhappy daughter into your house again, but, believe me, her heart will lie in her husband's grave!"

"Doctor, doctor! You are killing me!" he exclaimed, every feature writhing under the scourgings of remorse.

"Tell me! only tell me what can I do more? This house—all I have is hers, for the rest of her life. She may turn me into the streets. I'll live on bread and water, they shall roll in gold. But, oh, where is she! where is she? I'll send the carriage instantly." He rose, as if intending to ring the bell.

"No, no, Mr Hillary; she must not be disturbed! She must remain at her present abode, under the roof of charity, where she lies, sweet being! humble and grateful among her sisters in suffering!"

"I—I'll give a thousand pounds to the charity—I will. I'll give a couple of thousands—so help me God, I will! And I'll give it in the name of a Repentant Old Sinner. Oh, I'll do everything that a guilty wretch can do. But I *must* see my daughter! I must hear her blessed innocent lips say that she forgives me"——

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"Pause, sir," said I solemnly—"you know not that she will live to leave the hospital, or receive your penitent acknowledgments—that she will not die while I am telling her the horrid"——

"What! has she yet to hear of it?" he exclaimed, looking aghast.

"I told you so, sir, some time ago."

"Oh, yes, you did—you did—but I forgot! Lord, Lord, I feel going mad!" He rose feebly from the sofa, and staggered for a moment to and fro, but his knees refused their support, and he sank down again upon his seat, where he sat staring at me with a dull glassy eye, while I proceeded—

"Another melancholy duty remains to be performed. I think, sir, you should see his remains."

"I—*see the body!*" Fright flitted over his face. "Do you wish me to drop down dead beside it, sir? I see the body? It would burst out a-bleeding directly I got into the room—for I murdered him! Oh, God, forgive me! Oh, spare me such a sight!"

"Well, sir, since your alarm is so great, that sad sight may be spared; but there is *one* thing you must do."——I paused; he looked at me apprehensively—"testify your repentance, sir, by following his poor remains to the grave."

"I—I could not! It's no use frightening me thus, doctor!—I—I tell you I should die—I should never return home alive! But, if you'll allow it, my carriage shall follow. I'll give orders this very night for a proper, a grand funeral, such as is fit for—*my—my—son-in-law!* He shall be buried in my vault. No, no, that cannot be, for then"—he shuddered—"I must lie beside him! But I cannot go to the funeral! Lord, Lord, how the crowd would stare at me! how they would hoot me! They would tear me out of the coach. No"—he trembled—"spare me that also! kind sir, spare me attending the funeral! I'll remain at home in my own room in the dark all that day upon my knees, but I cannot, nay, I will not follow him to the grave. The tolling of that bell"—his voice died away—"would kill me."

"There is yet another thing, sir. His little boy"—my voice faltered—"is living at my house; perhaps you would refuse to see him, for he is very like his wretched father."

"Oh bring him! bring him to me!" he murmured. "How I will worship him! what I will do for him! But how his murdered father will always look out of his eyes at me! Oh, my God! whither shall I go, what must I do to escape? Oh, that I had died and been buried with my poor wife, the other day, before I had heard of all this!"

"You would have known—you would have heard of it *hereafter*, sir."

"Ah! that's it! I know it—I know what you mean, and I feel it's true!—Yes, I shall he *damned* for what I've done!—Such a wretch—how can I expect forgiveness? Oh, will you read a prayer with me? No, I'll pray myself—no, I dare not—cannot"——

"Pray, sir; and may your prayers be heard! And also pray that I may be able to tell safely my awful message to your daughter—that the blow may not smite her into the grave! And lastly, sir," I added, rising, and addressing him with all the emphasis and solemnity I could, "I charge you, in the name of God, to make no attempt to see your daughter, or send to her, till you see or hear from me again."

He promised to obey my injunctions, imploring me to call upon her the next day, and grasping my hand between his own with a convulsive energy, so that I could not extricate it but with some little force. As I had never once offered a syllable of sympathy throughout our interview, so I quitted his presence coldly and sternly, while he threw himself down at full length upon the sofa, and I heard without any emotion his half-choked exclamation, "Lord, Lord, what is to become of me?"

On reaching the back drawing-room, I encountered Miss Gubbley walking to and fro, excessively pale and agitated. I had uncoiled that little viper—I had plucked it from the heart into which it had crept—and so far I felt that I had not failed in that night's

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errand! I foresaw her speedy dismissal; and it took place within a day or two of that on which I had visited Mr Hillary.

The next day, about noon, I called at the lodgings where Elliott's remains were lying, in order that I might make a few simple arrangements for a speedy funeral.

"Oh—here's Dr ——!" exclaimed the woman of the house, to a gentleman dressed in black, who, with two others in similar habiliments, was just quitting. "These here gentlemen, sir, are come about the funeral, sir, of poor Mr Elliott."—I begged them to return into the house. "I presume, sir," said I, "you have been sent here by Mr Hillary's orders?"

"A—Mr Hillary did me the honour, sir, to request me to call, sir," replied the polite man of death with a low bow —"and am favoured with the expression of his wishes, sir, to spare no expense in showing his respect for the deceased. So my men have just measured the body, sir; the shell will be here to-night, sir, the leaden coffin the day after, and the outer coffins"——

"Stop, sir—Mr Hillary is premature. He has quite mistaken my wishes, sir. *I* act as the executor of Mr Elliott, and Mr Hillary has no concern whatever with the burial of these remains."

He bowed with an air of mingled astonishment and mortification.

"It is my wish and intention, sir," said I, "that this unfortunate gentleman might be buried in the simplest and most private manner possible"——

"Oh, sir! but Mr Hillary's orders to me were—pardon me, sir, so *very* liberal, to do the thing in a gentlemanlike way"——

"I tell you again, sir, that Mr Hillary has nothing whatever to do with the matter, nor shall I admit of his interference. If you choose to obey *my* orders—you will procure a plain deal coffin, a hearse and pair, and one mourning coach, and provide a grave in —— churchyard — nay, open Mr Hillary's vault and bury there, if he will permit it—I care not."

"I really think, sir, you'd better employ a person in the small line," said he, casting a grim look at his two attendants—"I'm not accustomed"——

"You may retire then, sir, at once," said I; and with a lofty bow the great undertaker withdrew. No!—despised, persecuted, and forsaken had poor Elliott been in his life; there should be, I resolved, no splendid mockery—no fashionable foolery, about his burial! I chose for him not the vault of Mr Hillary, but a grave in the humble churchyard of ——, where the poor suicide might slumber in "penitential loneliness!"

He was buried as I wished—no one attending the funeral but myself, the proprietor of the house in which he had lived at the period of his death, and one of his early and humble acquaintance, who had been present at his marriage. I had wished to carry with us, as chief mourner, little Elliott —by way of fulfilling, as far as possible, the touching injunctions left by his father—but my wife dissuaded me from it. "Well, poor Elliott," said I, as I took my last look into his grave—

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well!

Heaven forgive the rash act which brought his days to an untimely close, and him whose cruelty and wickedness occasioned it!"

I shall not bring the reader again into the guilty and gloomy presence of Mr Hillary. His hard heart was indeed broken by the blow that poor Elliott had so recklessly struck, and whose mournful prophecy was in this respect fulfilled. Providence decreed that the declining days of the inexorable and unnatural parent should be clouded with a wretchedness that admitted of neither intermission nor alleviation, equally destitute as he was of consolation from the past, and hope from the future!

And his daughter! Oh, disturb not the veil that has fallen over the broken-hearted!

Never again did the high and noble spirit of Mary Elliott lift itself up; for



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her heart lay buried in her young husband's grave—the grave dug for him by the eager and cruel hands of her father. In vain did those hands thenceforth lavishly scatter about her all the splendours and luxuries of unbounded wealth; they could never divert her cold undazzled eye from the mournful image of him whose death had purchased them; and what could she see ever beside her, in her too late repentant father, but his murderer!

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# THE LAST CHAPTER.

## THE DESTROYER.

Fair and innocent readers! how many, many thousands of you will read this narrative with beating and indignant hearts! Shrink not from its sad—its faithful details; consider them, if it be not presumptuously spoken, in somewhat of that spirit in which you ponder the mournful history of Eve and Eden—of her, our first mother, who, weakly listening to the serpent tempter, was ignominiously thrust out of her bright abode, degraded from her blessed estate, and entailed innumerable ills upon her hapless progeny!

With kindly and fervent feeling, my conscience bearing testimony to the purity of my intentions, have I drawn up, and now thus commend to you—to readers indeed of both sexes, and of all classes of society, but those especially who move amidst the scenes from which its incidents have been taken—this narrative, the last *Passage from the Diary of a late Physician:* of him who, having been long acquainted with you, now bids you farewell; and could his eye detect among you one whose trembling foot was uplifted to deviate from the path of honour and of virtue, he would whisper, amidst his reluctant adieus—BEWARE!

Mrs St Helen, a young, a fond, and beautiful mother, having, one morning in June 18—, observed a faint flush on the forehead of her infant son—her first-born and only child, and ascertained from the nursery-maid that he had been rather restless during the night, persuaded herself and her husband that matters were serious enough to require immediate medical assistance from London. The worthy Colonel, therefore, ordered his phaeton to be at the door by ten o'clock; and, having been scarcely allowed by his anxious wife to swallow a cup of coffee and finish his egg, presently jumped into his vehicle and dashed off almost as rapidly as Mrs St Helen, who remained standing on the steps, could have wished. Though the distance was nearly nine miles, he reached my house by a little after eleven, and was at once shown into my room, where I was arranging my list of daily visits. It seemed clear, from his hurried statement, that his little son and heir was about to encounter the perils of scarlet fever or measles, at the very least; and, such were his importunities, that though I had several special engagements for the early part of the day, I was induced, at his suggestion, to put two hacks to my carriage, and drive down to Densleigh Grange, accompanied by the colonel, who ordered his servant to remain in town till the horses had been rested.

This was the first time that my professional services had been required in Colonel St Helen's family—in fact, I had never been at Densleigh, though,

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previous to their marriage, I had been rather intimately acquainted with Mrs St Helen. We had never once met even since the day of her marriage, three years ago. When I last saw her—upon that happy occasion—I thought her certainly one of the loveliest young women the eye could look upon. I really believe that her person and manners were the most fascinating I ever witnessed. When I first saw her she was only seventeen, and dressed in the deepest mourning; for her father, the Honourable Mr Annesley, a beneficed clergyman in the West of England, had recently died, leaving her to the care of his brother the Earl of Hetheringham, whose family I was then attending. Her mother had died about a year after giving birth to this her first and only child; and her father left nothing behind him but his daughter—and his debts. The former he bequeathed, as I have already intimated, to his brother, who accepted the charge with a very ungracious air. He was a cold, proud man—qualities, however, in which his countess excelled him—by no means rich, except in children; of whom he had three sons and five daughters, who instantly recognised in their beautiful cousin a most formidable competitor for the notice of society. And they were right. The form of her features was worthy of the rich commingled expression of sweetness, spirit, and intellect that beamed from them. What passion shone out of her dark blue eyes! Her figure, too, was well-proportioned and graceful, just budding out into womanhood. She was sitting, when I first saw her, at a little rosewood table, near the countess, in her boudoir—one hand hung down with a pen in it, while the other supported her forehead, from which her fingers were pressing aside her auburn hair—evidently in a musing mood, which my sudden entrance through the door, already standing wide open, put an end to. "You need not go," said the countess coldly, seeing her hastily preparing to shut up her little desk—"my niece—Miss Annesley, doctor!" I knew the countess, her character and circumstances, well; this exquisite girl, her niece, and she with five daughters to dispose of!—Miss Annesley, after slightly acknowledging my salutation, resumed her seat and pen. I could hardly keep my eyes away from her. If she looks so lovely now, in spite of this gloomy dress, thought I, what must she be when she resumes the garb of youthful gaiety and elegance! Ah, countess, you may well tremble for your daughters, if this girl is to appear among them. "You see, doctor," continued the countess, in a matter-of-fact manner, while these thoughts glanced across my mind—"we are all thrown into sables through the death of the earl's brother, Mr Annesley."

"Indeed!" I interrupted, with a look of sympathy towards her niece, who spread her hand over her eyes, while the pen that was in the other slightly quivered. "This young lady is, in fact, all my poor brother-in-law left behind him; and" (adding in a lower tone) "she now forms one of our *little* family!" I felt infinitely hurt at the scarce-concealed sneer with which she uttered the word "little." Poor Miss Annesley, I feared, had perceived it; for, after evidently struggling ineffectually to conceal her emotions, she rose and stepped abruptly towards the door.

"You'll find your cousins in the drawing-room, love; go and sit with them," said the countess, endeavouring to speak affectionately. "Poor thing!" she continued, as soon as Miss Annesley had closed the door, after which I fancied I heard her run rapidly upstairs—doubtless to weep alone in her own room—"her father hasn't been dead more than a fortnight, and she feels it acutely!—shockingly involved, my dear doctor—over head and ears in debt! You've no idea how it annoys the earl! My niece is perfectly penniless! Literally, we were obliged to provide the poor thing with mournings! I insisted on the earl's making her one of our family;"—a great falsehood, as I subsequently discovered, for she had suggested and urged sending her abroad to a nunnery, which,

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however inclined to do, he dared not for appearances' sake. "She'll be a companion for my younger daughters, though she's quite countrified at present—don't you think so?"

"Pardon me, my dear countess—she struck me as extremely elegant and beautiful," I answered, with sufficient want of tact.

"Rather pretty, certainly—she's only seventeen, poor thing!" drawled the countess, immediately changing the subject.

I could not help feeling much interest in the poor girl, thrust thus, in the first agonies of her grievous bereavement, into a soil and atmosphere ungenial and even noxious—into a family that at once disliked and dreaded her. What a life seemed before her! But, I reflected, the conflict may be painful, it cannot be long. Lady Hetheringham cannot utterly exclude her niece from society; and *there*, once seen, she must triumph. And so, indeed, it happened; for, in less than six months after the period of her arrival at her uncle's, she began to go out freely into society with his family; it having been considered by her prudent and affectionate relatives, that the sooner this young creature could be got off their hands the better. The earl and countess, indeed, began to feel some apprehension now and then lest one of their niece's *male* cousins—the eldest, possibly, might feel rather more attachment towards her than mere relationship required. She was directed, therefore, to apply herself diligently to the completion of her education, in which she had already made rapid progress; which, together with her natural talents, soon rendered her independent of the fashionable instructors who taught her cousins. Miss Annesley was, in truth, a creature of much enthusiasm of character; of a generous and confiding nature, a sanguine temperament—fond withal of admiration, as who is not, of either sex? She felt in her element in the glittering society in which she now incessantly appeared, or rather into which she was forced. She breathed freely, for glorious was the contrast it afforded to the chilling, withering restraint and coldness that ever awaited her at her uncle's. *There* she but too sorrowfully felt herself an intruder—that her aunt and uncle were stirring heaven and earth to get rid of her. Many a bitter hour did she pass alone when she reflected upon this, and saw no course open to her but to second the exertions of her heartless relatives, and be emancipated from her bitter thraldom by almost any one who chose to make the attempt. Her anxieties on this score laid her open to the imputation of being little more than a brilliant flirt or coquette—than which certainly nothing could be more distant from the wishes, or repugnant to the feelings, of poor Miss Annesley. She saw that her uncle and aunt would have encouraged the advances of any one that seemed likely to propose for a beautiful but penniless orphan, and was almost disposed to gratify them. What sort of life would not be preferable to that of her present bitter dependence? Alas! how generous, how noble a heart was thus trifled with—was thus endangered, if not even directly betrayed, by those whose sacred duty it was, whose pride and delight it should have been, to guard and cherish it! However pure, however high-minded, a girl of Miss Annesley's youth and inexperience, of her eager and fervent temper and character, could not but be exposed to imminent danger when thrust thus into such scenes as are afforded by the fashionable society of the metropolis. Poor Emma! No eye of zealous and vigilant affection followed thee when wandering through these dazzling mazes of dissipation and of danger!—Anxious, however, as were Lord and Lady Hetheringham to get rid of their lovely charge, their efforts were unsucessful. Two seasons passed over, and their niece, though the admired of all beholders, utterly eclipsing her impatient and envious cousins, seemed unlikely to form an alliance; whether owing to the incessant and widely-propagated sneers and injurious falsehoods of her five rivals, the ill-disguised coldness and dislike of the earl and countess, or, above all, her want

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of fortune. Many who admired her, and felt disposed to pay her decisive attentions, were deterred by the fear that a young woman, of her family, station, beauty, and accomplishments, was an object placed far beyond their reach; while others sighed—

Sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again;

and feared that if she brought her husband no fortune, she nevertheless was perfectly able and disposed to spend *his*. Conquests, in the ordinary phrase, she made innumerable, and was several times mentioned in the newspapers as "likely to be led to the hymeneal altar," by Lord ——, Sir ——, the Honourable Mr ——, and so forth. As far, indeed, as appearances went, there was some ground for each of these rumours. Miss Annesley had many followers, most of whom were, however, satisfied by having their names associated in fashionable rumour with that of so distinguished a beauty. The only one of all these triflers who ever established anything like an interest in her heart was the elegant and well-known Alverley: a man whose fascinating appearance and manners soon distanced the pretensions of all those who aimed at an object he had selected. Alverley was, when he chose, irresistible. He could inspire the woman he sought with a conviction that he loved her passionately; throwing a fervour and devotion into his manner which few, very few women, and no young inexperienced woman, could resist. Poor Miss Annesley fancied that this envied prize was hers; that he was destined to be led a "graceful captive at her chariot-wheels;" that he was the gallant knight who was to deliver her from her bondage. Here, too, however, she was destined to meet with disappointment; the distinguished Alverley disappeared from among the throng of her admirers quite suddenly; the fact being, that in a confidential conversation with one of her cousins, in a quadrille, he had become satisfied that it was undesirable for him to prosecute any further his disinterested attentions in *that* quarter. Miss Annesley felt his defection more keenly than that of any other of her transient admirers. Her eager feelings, her inexperienced heart, would not permit her to see how utterly unworthy was one who could act thus, of even a moment's regret. Alas! her high spirit had not even fair play! His graceful person, his handsome and expressive features, his fascinating manners, could not so easily be banished from her young heart; and her grief and mortification were but little assuaged, however perhaps her wounded *pride* might be soothed, by the intimation Alverley contrived to have conveyed to her, from several quarters, that her regrets fell infinitely short of the poignancy of his own, in being compelled by others, on whom his all depended, to abandon the dearest hopes he had ever cherished.

Thus it was that Miss Annesley and her heartless and selfish relatives beheld two seasons pass away without any prospect of their being permanently released from one another's presence and society; and an infinite gratification did the poor girl experience in being invited to spend the autumn of 18— with a distant relative of Lady Hetheringham's, in a remote part of England. This lady was the widow of a general officer, and during her stay in town that season, had formed an attachment towards Miss Annesley, whose painful position in the earl's family she soon perceived and compassionated; therefore it was that her invitation had been given, and she felt delighted at securing the society of her young and brilliant guest during the tedious autumn and winter months.

Miss Annesley proved herself to be possessed of a warm and affectionate heart in addition to beauty and accomplishments, and every day increased the attachment between her and her excellent hostess. These six months were the happiest Miss Annesley had ever known. Before returning to town, an event she dreaded, a very eligible offer of marriage was made to her by a relative of her hostess, who

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happened to be quartered with his regiment in her immediate neighbourhood, Major St Helen. He was an amiable, high-spirited man, of excellent family, in easy circumstances, and with considerable expectations. His features, though not handsome, were manly and expressive; his figure was tall and commanding, his manners frank and simple, his disposition affectionate; his suit was supported by Miss Annesley's kind hostess, and before her return to town he gained the promise of her hand. The more, indeed, she knew of him, and learned of his character, the more confidently she committed herself to him; she became sincerely and affectionately attached to him who loved her so evidently with fervour and enthusiasm. In about a twelvemonth's time she was married to him—in her twentieth year, he being about ten years her senior—from the Earl of Hetheringham's. I was present, and never saw a lovelier bride; how distinctly, even at this distance of time, is her figure before my mind's eye! As her uncle, who felt as if a thorn had been at length plucked out of his side, led her down to the travelling carriage that was in readiness to convey them away, I was one of the last to whisper a hasty benison into the ear of the trembling, blushing girl.——Gracious Heaven! could either of us at that moment have lifted the veil of futurity, and foreseen her becoming the subject of this last and dreadful passage from my Diary!

About three years afterwards was born the little patient I was now on my way to visit. During this considerable interval I had almost lost sight of them; for Major, since become Colonel St Helen, after a year's travel on the continent, engaged the delightful residence to which we were so hastily driving, and where their little son and heir was born. Here they lived in delightful retirement—only occasionally, and for very short periods, visiting the metropolis; the chief reason being Mrs St Helen's reluctance to renew her intercourse with Lord and Lady Hetheringham, or any member of their family. It was evident, from our conversation as we drove down, that their attachment towards each other continued unabated. The only drawback upon their happiness was a fear that he might be, erelong, summoned upon foreign service. When within about a mile of Densleigh, our conversation, as if by mutual consent, dropped—and we leaned back in the corners of the carriage in silence; he, doubtless, occupied with anxieties about his little son, and the probable state of matters he should meet on reaching home: I sinking into reverie upon past times. I was anxious to see again one in whom I had formerly felt such interest—and sincerely rejoiced at her good fortune, not only in escaping the dangers to which she had been exposed, but in making so happy a marriage.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the colonel suddenly, who had been for the last few minutes incessantly putting his head out of the window—"look—they are"—his keen eye had discovered two female figures standing at the outer gate opening upon the highroad—"Drive on, coachman, for God's sake!"

"Don't alarm yourself, colonel"—said I; adding, as we drew near enough to distinguish one of the figures pushing open the gate, and stepping into the road towards us—"for one of them can be no other than Mrs St Helen, and the other is her maid, with my little patient in her arms—positively! Ha, ha, colonel! That looks very much like scarlet fever or measles!"

"Certainly you are right," replied the colonel, with a sigh that seemed to let off all his anxiety. "That is my wife, indeed—and the child: there can be no mistake—but how can they think of venturing out till, at all events, they are"——

Though I was at the moment rather vexed at having come so far, at such inconvenience, too, I soon made up my mind to it, and felt glad at the opportunity of seeing how the beautiful Miss Annesley would show in the character of Mrs St Helen—a mother.

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"You must give these poor reeking creatures a little refreshment, colonel, before I can take them back, and me a little luncheon," said I, with a smile, looking at my watch, and the horses.

"Certainly—oh, of course! Forgive me, dear doctor, for having been so nervous and precipitate! But you are a father yourself. 'Tis all my wife's fault, I can assure you, and I shall tell her she must make the apology due for bringing you down from London for nothing! The fact is, that *I* never thought there was anything the matter with the child;" which was, I thought, a very great mistake of the colonel's.

"I assure you I am infinitely better pleased to have the opportunity of seeing Mrs St Helen again, and in health and spirits, than to see her plunged into distress by the illness of her child—so pray say no more about it!"

As we approached, Mrs St Helen hastily gave her parasol into the hands of the maid, from whose arms she snatched the child, and walked quickly up to the carriage door, as we drew up. For a moment I quite forgot the errand on which I had come, as close before me stood the Emma Annesley of a former day, a thousand times more lovely, to my eye, than I had ever seen her. She wore a light loose bonnet, of transparent white crape, and her shawl, which had been displaced in the hurry of seizing the child, hung with graceful negligence over her shoulders, displaying to infinite advantage a figure of ripening womanhood—the young mother, proud of the beautiful infant she bore in her arms—her expressive features full of animation; altogether she struck me as a fit subject for one of those airy and exquisite sketches with which Sir Thomas Lawrence was then occasionally delighting the world.

"Oh, Doctor ——!" she commenced, in the same rich voice I so well remembered, holding out one of her hands to me as I descended the carriage steps—"I am so delighted to see you again—but really," looking at her husband, "Arthur did so frighten me about the child, and I am not a *very* experienced mother—but I suppose it's the same with all fathers—alarmed at *such* trifles?"

"Really, Emma, this is capital," interrupted the colonel, half-piqued and half-pleased, while I could not help laughing at them both—"so it was *I*—but who was it, Emma, that came rushing into my dressing-room this morning—her hair half *en papillote*"——

"Arthur, don't be absurd—there's no need"——

"Well—I forgive you! It was all *my* fault, of course; but, thank God! here's the young hero, seemingly as well as ever he was in his life—and many, many happy returns of the day"——

"'Tis the child's first birth-day, doctor"—interrupted Mrs St Helen, eagerly, with a sweet smile.

The colonel took the child out of his mother's arms, and kissed him heartily. "But what apology can we make, Emma, to Doctor ——?"

"Oh, don't say a syllable! I am sincerely glad that I have come, and the more so that there was not the necessity for it that you supposed. My dear Mrs St Helen, how glad I am to see you," I continued, as she took my arm, the colonel preceding us with the child in his arms, who seemed, however, anxious to get back to his nurse. "I have often thought of you, and wondered where you had hid yourselves! But before we talk of past times, let me hear what it was that so alarmed you about that sweet little child?"

"Oh—why, I suspect it's all my fault, doctor—I was very foolish; but we do so love him, that we are afraid of the least thing. He's so beautiful, that I fear we shall lose him—he's too good—we should be *too* happy"——

"All mothers, Mrs St Helen, say that; but I want to hear whether we are right in dismissing all anxiety about the appearances that so alarmed you this morning."

"I'm quite ashamed of it! It was evidently nothing but a little redness on his forehead, which was occasioned, no doubt, by the pressure of the pil-

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low—and it quite disappeared before the colonel had been gone half-an-hour—and the nurse did not tell me till afterwards—and we had no man here at the time to ride after the colonel—and so"—pushing about the end of her parasol upon the grass, and looking down, as we slowly followed the colonel towards the house. I laughed heartily at the kind of sheepish air with which she confessed the slight occasion there had been for her alarm. She began again to apologise——

"Poh, poh, my dear Mrs St Helen, this has happened to me more than a hundred times! but never when I less regretted it than I do now. I have had a delightful drive, and I have seen *you* looking so well and happy—you cannot think how rejoiced I am on your account! What a contrast is your present life to that you led at the Earl of Hetheringham's—you must be as happy as the day is long!"

"And so indeed I am! I never, never knew what real happiness was till I knew Colonel St Helen! We have never had a difference yet! He worships the very ground"——She paused, hung her head, and her eyes filled with tears.

"He looks quite the soldier," said I, glancing at his tall and erect figure.

"Oh, yes, and he *is!* He has the noblest disposition in the world! so generous, and as simple as the little creature that he carries. You would hardly think him the same man when he is at home, that at the head of his regiment looks so cold, and stern, and formal. And he is as brave as"——her beautiful features were turned towards me, flushed with excitement—"Do you know he's been in three engagements, and I have heard from several officers that he is one of the most desperate and fearless"——

"Ah, you recollect those beautiful lines, Mrs St Helen," said I—

The warrior's heart, when touch'd by me,
Can as downy, soft, and yielding be,
As his own white plume that high amid death
Through the field hath shone, yet moves with a breath!*

* Lallah Rookh.

Her eyes, which were fixed intently upon me while I repeated these lines, filled with tears as I concluded, and she spoke not. "Where are those lines?" she began at length; but, ashamed of her yet unsubdued emotion, she quickly turned aside her head, and left the sentence unfinished. Her little dog, that came scampering down towards us, happily turned her thoughts.

"How very, very ridiculous!" she exclaimed, half-laughing half-crying, pointing with her parasol to a light blue riband tied round the dog's neck, in a large knot or bow, the little animal now frisking merrily about her, and then rolling on the grass, evidently not knowing what to make of his gay collar. "The fact is, doctor, that this being our little boy's first birthday, my maid has determined that even the dog—Down, Fan! down! you little impudent creature—go, and run after your young master;" and away bounded Fan, leaving us once more alone.

"When did you hear of the Hetheringhams last?"

"Oh, by the way," she answered eagerly, "only a day or two ago. And what do you think! Did you read that account of the elopement in the papers—I mean the one with such numbers of stars and initials?"

"Certainly, I recollect: but whom do they mean?"

"My fair proud cousin, Anne Sedley, and the youngest officer in Arthur's regiment! Who would have thought it! She was always the most unkind of any of them towards me; but I am not the less sorry for her. Nothing but misery can come of an elopement; and how they are to live I do not know, for neither of them has anything."

"You see very little of the earl and countess, or your cousins, I suppose, now?"

"We have scarcely met since my marriage, and *we* don't regret it. Arthur does not like any of them, for I could not help telling him how they had treated me; and, besides, we see nobody, nor do we wish, for we are not yet tired of each other, and have plenty to do at home of one kind or an-

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other. In fact, we have only one thing that distresses us, a fear lest the colonel may be ordered to join his regiment and go abroad. Oh! we tremble at the thought, at least I am sure that *I* do; especially if it should happen before November," she added suddenly, faintly colouring. I understood her delicate intimation, that she bade fair to become again a mother, and told her so. "What should I do in such a situation, all alone here—my husband gone, perhaps never to return?" she inquired tremulously. "I assure you, it often makes me very sad indeed—but here he comes."

"Why, Emma! How serious! Positively in tears! What! have you been *regretting* to Doctor —— that you have not got a patient for him?"

"No, dearest Arthur—the fact is, we have been talking over past times! —I was telling him how happy we were in our solitude here"——

"But, I dare say, Doctor ——, with myself," said the colonel quickly, observing Mrs St Helen not yet to have entirely recovered from her emotion—"will not think the worse of Densleigh when we've had a little lunch."

"Well—I'll rejoin you in a few minutes," interrupted Mrs St Helen, turning from us.

"Aha," said the Colonel, as he led me into the room where lunch was spread—"she's gone to look after Master St Helen's dinner, I suppose; we sha'n't see her this quarter of an hour! —He must never eat a mouthful without her seeing it!—We won't wait, Doctor ——," and we sat down—for I had really not much time to lose. Densleigh certainly was a delightful residence—happily situated, and laid out with much taste and elegance. The room in which we were sitting opened upon a soft green, sloping down to the banks of a pleasant stream, and commanded an extensive prospect — of which Mrs St Helen had recently completed a very beautiful water-colour sketch, which was suspended near where I sat.

"You must come some day, doctor, and see my wife's portfeuille—for she really draws very beautifully. I'll try to get a sight of the picture she has nearly finished of our little Arthur—by Heaven, 'tis perfection!"

Here Mrs St Helen made her appearance; Master St Helen had made a very hearty dinner, and mamma was again in high spirits, and I persuaded her to take a glass of wine with me—but not to give me a sight of the mysteries which the colonel had spoken of. She would not for the world let me see her half-finished daubs—and so forth; and, as for the others, she would show them all to me the next time I came, &c. &c. All lady-artists are alike, so I did not press the matter. A pleasant hour I passed at Densleigh—thinking, where was happiness to be found if not *there!* I was not allowed to leave before I had promised never to come within a mile or two without calling upon them. They attended me to the door, where were drawn up my carriage, and the pony phaeton of Mrs St Helen, with two beautiful little greys, which also were bedight with the light-blue ribands. Master St Helen and his maid were already seated in it, and I saw that Mrs St Helen longed to join them. Ah, you *are* a happy woman, thought I, as I drove off—you ought indeed to feel grateful to Heaven for having cast your lot in pleasant places—long may you live, the pride of your husband—mother, it may be, of a race of heroes!

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About six months afterwards, my eye lit upon the following announcement in one of the newspapers:—"On the 2d instant, at Densleigh Grange, the lady of Colonel St Helen, of a son." I discovered, upon inquiry, that both mother and child were doing well—although the event so dreaded by Mrs St Helen had come to pass, and very greatly affected her spirits—the colonel was ordered, with his regiment, upon foreign service. She had nearly succeeded in persuading him to quit the army; and it required all the influence of his most experienced personal friends, as well as a tolerably distinct intimation of opinion from the Royal Commander-in-Chief at the Horse-Guards, to prevent him from yielding

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to her entreaties. His destination was India; and with a very heavy heart, six weeks before her accouchement took place, he bade her adieu—feeling that too probably it was for ever! He could not, however, tear himself away; twice did he return suddenly and unexpectedly to Densleigh, after having taken, as he had thought, a final farewell—She insisted upon accompanying him, on the last occasion, to London, and witnessing his departure. When it had taken place, she returned to Densleigh, and for a while gave herself up to the most violent emotions of grief. Dreading the consequences to her, in her critical circumstances, Mrs Ogilvie, the sister of Colonel St Helen, came down to Densleigh, and succeeded in bringing Mrs St Helen up to town with her, hoping that change of scene, and the gaieties of the metropolis, might aid in recruiting her agitated spirits, and thereby prepare her for the trial she had so soon to undergo. She had not been long in London before she prevailed upon Mrs Ogilvie to drive with her to the Horse-Guards, and endeavour, if possible, to gain some intelligence as to the probable duration of her husband's absence, and of the nature of the service in which he was to be employed. Her heart almost failed her when the carriage drew up at the Horse-Guards. With some trepidation she gave the servant a card bearing her name, on which she had written a few lines stating the inquiry she had called to make, and desired him to take and wait with it for an answer.—"His Royal Highness will send to you, ma'am, in a few moments," said the servant on his return. Presently an officer in splendid uniform was seen approaching the carriage—he was an aide-de-camp of the commander-in-chief, and Mrs St Helen, with some additional agitation, recognised in him, as he stood before her, Captain Alverley. To her it was indeed a most unexpected meeting; and he seemed not free from embarrassment.

"His Royal Highness has directed me to inform you," said he, bowing politely, "that he regrets being unable to receive you, as he is now engaged with important business. He also directs me to say, in answer to your inquiry, that Colonel St Helen's stay will probably not exceed three years." While he was yet speaking, Mrs St Helen, overcome with agitation, hastily bowed to him, ordered the coachman to drive on, and sunk back on her seat exhausted.

"Emma! Emma! what can you mean?" exclaimed Mrs Ogilvie, with much displeasure; "I never saw such rudeness! Yes," looking back towards the Horse-Guards, "he may well be astonished! I declare he is still standing thunderstruck at your most extraordinary behaviour!"

"I—I cannot help it," murmured Mrs St Helen faintly, "I thought I should have fainted. He so reminded me of Arthur—and—did you observe," she continued sobbing, "nothing was said of the nature of the service! Oh, I am sure I shall never see him again! I wish, I wish I had not called at that odious place—I *might* have then hoped!" A long drive, however, through a cheerful part of the suburbs, at length somewhat relieved her oppression; but it was evident from her silence, and her absent manner, that her thoughts continued occupied with what she had seen and heard at the Horse-Guards.

Captain Alverley *did* stand thunderstruck, and continued so standing for some moments after the carriage had driven out of sight. Had I then seen him, and known that of his character which I now know, I should have been reminded of the poet's vivid picture of the deadly serpent—

> Terribly beautiful the serpent lay,
> Wreathed like a coronet of gold and jewels
> Fit for a tyrant's brow; anon he flew,
> Straight like an arrow shot from his own wings!*

—or rather it might have appeared as though the rattlesnake were stunned for an instant by the suddenness of the appearance of his beautiful victim. No; the fatal spring had not yet been made, nor had as yet the fascination

* The Pelican Island; by James Montgomery.

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of that death-dooming eye been *felt* by the victim!

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Almost immediately upon Colonel St Helen's arrival in India, he was hurried into action; and in little more than a year after his departure from England, the Gazette made most honourable mention of his name, as connected with a very important action in the Mahratta war. I could easily contrive, I thought, to call to-day upon Mrs St Helen, and so be, perhaps, the first to show her the Gazette; and I made my arrangements accordingly. Putting the important document in my pocket, I drove in the direction of Densleigh, having a patient in the neighbourhood. I left my carriage in the road, and walked up the avenue to the house. I trode so noiselessly upon the "soft smooth-shaven green," that my approach was not perceived by the occupants of the room in which we had lunched on the occasion already mentioned. They were Mrs St Helen and her little son Arthur. The latter was evidently enacting the soldier, having a feather stuck in his cap, and a broad red riband round his waist, to which was attached a sword; and, in order to complete his resemblance to the figure of an officer, he had a drum fastened in front of him, to the harmonious sound of which he was marching fiercely round the room; while his mother—her beautiful countenance turned fully and fondly towards him—was playing upon the piano, "See the conquering hero comes!" She perceived me approach, and started for a moment; but hastily motioning me not to appear and disturb what was going on, I stepped aside.

"And what does brave papa do, Arthur?" said she, ceasing to play. He stopped, dropped his drumsticks, drew his little sword with some difficulty from its sheath, and after appearing to aim one or two blows at some imaginary enemy, returned it to its scabbard, and was marching with a very dignified air past his mother, when she rose from her seat, and suddenly clasping the young warrior in her arms, smothered him with kisses.

"Pray walk in, dear doctor," said she, approaching me, after setting down the child, "you must forgive a poor lonely mother's weakness!"

"So, then, you have heard of it?"

"Heard of what?" she inquired hurriedly, slightly changing colour. I took out the *Gazette*. "Oh, come in, come in, and we'll sit down—I—I begin to feel—rather faint;" her eyes fastened upon the paper I held in my hands. We sat down together upon the sofa. As soon as, with the aid of a vinaigrette, she had recovered a little from her agitation, I read to her—who listened breathless—the very flattering terms in which Colonel St Helen's conduct in a most sanguinary action was mentioned in the despatch, with the gratifying addition, that his name was not included in the list of either killed or wounded. "Oh, my noble gallant Arthur!" she murmured, bursting into tears, "I knew he would acquit himself well! I wonder, Arthur, if he thought *of us* when he was in the field!" snatching up her son, who, with his little hands resting on her lap, stood beside her, looking up concernedly in her face—and folding him to her bosom. A flood of tears relieved her excitement. In a transport she kissed the *Gazette*, and thanked me fervently for having brought it to her. She presently rung the bell, and desired the butler to be sent for, who soon made his appearance:

"Are they at dinner?" she inquired. He bowed. "Then give them two bottles of wine, and let them drink their master's health; for"——

She could not finish the sentence, and I added for her—"Colonel St Helen has been engaged in a glorious action, and has gained great distinction"——

"I'll give it, ma'am—sir—I will," interrupted the impatient butler; "we'll be sure to drink my master's health, ma'am—his best health—and yours, ma'am—and the young gentleman; Lord, sir, it couldn't be otherwise! Is master hurt, sir?"

"Not a hair, I believe," I answered.

"Lord Almighty!" he exclaimed,

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unconsciously snapping his fingers, as his hands hung down, "only to think of it, ma'am—how glad you must be, ma'am—and young master, there, ma'am; but how could it be otherwise, ma'am?"

"Thank you, Bennet, thank you! make yourselves happy, for I am sure I am," replied Mrs St Helen, as well as her agitation would allow her; and the butler withdrew. Poor Mrs St Helen asked me a hundred questions, which I had no more means of answering than herself; and, in short, was evidently greatly excited. As I stood at the open window, which looked on the lawn, admiring for a moment the prospect it commanded, my eye caught the figure of a cavalry officer, in undress uniform, followed by his groom, and cantering easily towards Densleigh.

"Who can this be, Mrs St Helen?" said I, pointing him out to her, as she rose from the sofa.

"Who, doctor? where?" she inquired hastily.

"It is an officer, in undress uniform, evidently coming hither—I suppose he brings you official information." At that moment the approaching figures were again, for an instant, visible at a sudden turn of the road; and Mrs St Helen, slightly changing colour, exclaimed, with, as I thought, a certain tremour easily accounted for—"Oh, yes; I know who it is—Captain Alverley, aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief; no doubt he comes to tell me what I know already, through your kindness; and—he may also bring me letters."

"Very possibly!—Well, dear Mrs St Helen, I most cordially congratulate you on this good news; but, pray, don't suffer yourself to be excited," said I, taking up my hat and stick.

"Don't hurry away, doctor," she replied. I took her hand in mine. It was cold, and trembled. I hastily repeated my advice, having already stayed longer than my engagements allowed, and took my leave. As I reached my carriage, Captain Alverley—if such was the officer's name—was just entering the gate, which his groom was holding open for him.

"Well," thought I, as I drove off, "if I were Colonel St Helen, and six or seven thousand miles off, I should not exactly *prefer a tête-à-tête*, even on the subject of my own magnificent exploits, between my beautiful wife and that handsome officer,"—for certainly, as far as my hurried scrutiny went, I never had seen a man with a finer person and air, or a more prepossessing countenance. That was the first time that I had ever seen or heard of Captain Alverley.

Some little time after this occurrence, the death of an elder brother entitled Colonel St Helen to an income of several thousands a-year, and a house in the immediate neighbourhood of Berkeley Square. This was an event the colonel had anticipated before leaving England, as his brother had long been in a declining state of health: and he had arranged with his solicitor and man of business, that should the event take place before the expiration of the term for which he held Densleigh, efforts were to be made to continue the lease, and the house in —— Street was to be let, but not for longer than three years. If, however, Densleigh could not be secured for a further lease, then Mrs St Helen was to occupy —— Street, till the colonel's return to England. Colonel St Helen's brother died shortly before the lease of Densleigh expired, and its proprietor, wishing to live in it himself, declined to renew the lease. The necessary arrangements therefore were made for removing Mrs St Helen, with her establishment, to —— Street—a noble residence, which the colonel had left orders should, in the contingency which had happened, be furnished entirely according to Mrs St Helen's wishes. He had also made the proper arrangements for putting her in possession of an additional allowance of £2000 a-year; and, under the judicious superintendence of his solicitor, all these arrangements were speedily and satisfactorily carried into effect; and Mrs St Helen was duly installed the mistress of her new and elegant residence, with a handsome equipage, a full retinue of servants, and a clear income of £3500 a-year, in-

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cluding her former allowance. Oh, unhappy, infatuated husband, to have made such an arrangement! Would that you had never permitted your lovely wife to enter such scenes of dazzling danger—that you had rather placed her in secret retirement till your return—far from the "garish eye" of the world—even in some lone sequestered spot,

Where glid the sunbeams through the latticed boughs,
And fell like dewdrops on the spangled ground,
To light the diamond-beetle on his way;
Where cheerful openings let the sky look down
Into the very heart of solitude,
On little garden-plots of social flowers,
That crowded from the shades to peep at daylight;
Or where impermeable foliage made
Midnight at noon, and chill damp horror reign'd
O'er dead fallen leaves and slimy funguses;—

*anywhere* but in London. It was done, however, at the impulse of a generous confiding nature—though in fatal error—for the best!

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I was driving home down —— Street one evening alone, on my return from a dinner party, when I was stopped for a moment by a crowd of carriages opposite Lady ——'s; and recollected that I had promised to look in, if possible. I therefore got out, and made my way as soon as I could into the crowded mansion. Can anything be absurder than such a scene? I always disliked balls and routs; but such as *these* must be perfectly intolerable, I fancy, to any sober, rational person. It was full five minutes before I could force my way up-stairs and along the spacious landing, to the door of the principal room, into which "*all the*" unhappy "*world*" had squeezed itself, and was undergoing purgatory. How many hundreds of ladies'-maids and valets would have gone distracted to see their mistresses and masters so unable to display their handiwork—standing jammed together!—but this is enjoyment and fashion—why should *I* find fault with those who experience pleasure in such scenes? After gazing on the glistening confused scene for a moment, admiring the fortitude of those who were enduring the heat and pressure without a murmur, perceiving no one that I knew, at least within speaking distance, I passed on towards another room, in search of Lady ——, whom I wished to show that I had kept my promise. The second room was much less crowded, and real, not make-believe, dancing was going forward.

"She's very beautiful, is she not?" said a gentleman just before me, to one of the two ladies who leaned upon his arms, and who seemed looking critically at the dancers. "Y—e—s, rather," was the answer, in a languid, drawling tone.

"Waltzes well enough," said the other lady, "but, for my part, I quite dislike to see it."

"Dislike to see it? You joke," interrupted the gentleman; "why do you dislike it? Upon my honour, I think it's quite a treat to see such waltzing as theirs."

"Oh, I daresay it's all correct enough, if one comes to *that*—but I must own, I should not waltz myself if I were married," said the glistening skeleton on his right arm, dropping its elaborately dressed head with a would-be *naïve* air. The ladies were two of the daughters of the Earl of Hetheringham—I knew not who the gentleman was.

"Really, I must say, it's too bad, under circumstances," said one of the ladies, disdainfully eyeing a couple who were floating gracefully round the room, and who presently stopped just before the spot where I was standing—the lady apparently exhausted for the moment with her exertion. The reader may guess my feelings on recognising in these waltzers—Captain Alverley and Mrs St Helen! Fearful of encountering her eye, I slipped away from where I had been standing—but not before I heard one of the fair critics, immediately before whom the pair of waltzers were standing, address her with a sweet air, and compliment her on her performance! At a little distance I continued to observe her movements. She was dressed

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magnificently, and became her dress magnificently. She was certainly the most beautiful woman in the room; and with her companion, who was in full regimentals, one of the most conspicuous couples present. After a few minutes' pause, spent in conversing with her two affectionate cousins, she suffered her partner to gently lead her off again among the waltzers. I could not help following her motions with mingled feelings of pity and indignation. I resolved to throw myself in her way before quitting the room; and for that purpose stepped in front of the circle of bystanders. I knew a little of Captain Alverley's character, at least, by his reputation; and recollected the agitation his approach had occasioned her, on my pointing out his figure to her at Densleigh. There were four or five couples waltzing; and those whom I was so eagerly observing, a second time stopped immediately in front of where I stood—he apologising for the force with which he had come against me. She, too, observed it, and turned her head to see to whom her partner had apologised. The instant she recognised me, her face became suffused with crimson. Her companion observed it, and looked at me with a surprised and haughty air, as if designing to discourage me from speaking to her. I was not, however, to be deterred by such a trifle.

"How are you, doctor?"—said, or rather stammered Mrs St Helen, giving me her hand, which I thought trembled a little.

"When did you hear from the colonel last?" I inquired presently, disregarding the insulting air of impatience manifested by Captain Alverley, who could not avoid observing the slight agitation and surprise my presence had occasioned his beautiful partner.

"Oh—I heard from India—not for several months—oh, yes, I did, about six weeks ago—He was very well when he wrote." Partly with the fatigue of waltzing, and partly through mental discomposure, she was evidently agitated. She would have continued her conversation with me, but Captain Alverley insisted on taking her in quest of a seat, and of refreshment. I soon after quitted the house, without any further attempt to see Lady ——; and my thoughts were so much occupied with the casual rencontre I have just described, that I walked several paces down the street on my way home, before I recollected that my carriage was waiting for me. I had seen nothing whatever that was directly improper—and yet I felt, or grieved, as though I had. Good God! was this the way in which Mrs St Helen testified her love for her generous confiding husband—for him who had so affectionately secured her, by anticipation, the means of enjoying his expected accession of fortune—for him who was at that moment, possibly, gallantly charging in action with the enemies of his country—or who might have already received the wound which rendered her a widow and her children fatherless? What accursed influence had deadened her keen sensibilities—had impaired her delicate perception of propriety? I began to feel heavy misgivings about this Captain Alverley—in short, I reached home full of vexing thoughts; for Mrs St Helen had suddenly sunk many, many degrees in my estimation. She did not appear to me to be the same woman that I had seen twelve months before at Densleigh—the tender mother, the enthusiastic wife—*what* had come to her?

I thought it not improbable that I should, in the morning, receive a message from her, requesting a visit during the day; and I was not mistaken—for while sitting at breakfast, her servant brought me a note to that effect—requesting me to call, if convenient, before one o'clock. I foresaw that our interview would be of a different description to any former one. However uneasy I felt on her account, I did not desire to be placed in the disagreeable position of receiving explanations and excuses which nothing had called forth but her own consciousness of impropriety, and my involuntary air of astonishment on the preceding evening. I had so many

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engagements that day, that it was nearly two o'clock before I could reach Mrs St Helen's. She sat in the drawing-room, with her sister-in-law, Mrs Ogilvie, who had called about an hour before—a very elegant, sweet woman, some ten or twelve years her senior. I had evidently interrupted an unpleasant interview between them; for the former was in tears, and the latter looked agitated—while, consequently, all of us looked rather embarrassed.

"Doctor ——," said Mrs St Helen quickly, after a few ordinary inquiries, "now, do pray tell me, did *you* see anything objectionable in my"——

"Emma! how *can* you be so foolish," interrupted Mrs Ogilvie, rising, with much displeasure. "I am really extremely vexed with you!" and she quitted the room without regarding Mrs St Helen's entreaties that she would stay. I should have liked to follow her, or that she had remained during my brief visit. I proceeded immediately, with a matter-of-fact air, to make a few professional inquiries.

"But, my dear Doctor ——," said she earnestly, without answering my questions—"do tell me candidly, what *did* you see so very particular—and amiss—in my conduct last night?"

"What did I see amiss? Dear Mrs St Helen, you amaze me! I had not been at Lady ——'s above a minute or two before we met, and I left almost directly after"——

"Then, what *did* your look mean? Do, dear doctor, tell me what that look meant—I really could not help observing it—and I can't forget it."

"Mrs St Helen! you really quite take me by surprise;—you must have strangely mistaken my looks."

"Perhaps you don't—I suppose—that is—I know what you meant—was, that you didn't admire married women waltzing? Now, *do* tell me, for I feel quite unhappy."

"Well, as you are so *very* anxious to know my opinion, I have no hesitation in saying a"——

"Oh, pray go on, doctor!"—interrupted Mrs St Helen impatiently.

"Why, all I was going to say is, that I certainly do not feel *particularly* pleased—but I may be quite absurd—at seeing married women waltzing, especially *mothers*."

"Dear doctor, and why not? You can't think how much I respect your opinion; but surely, good heavens! what can there be indelicate"——

"Mrs St Helen! I did not use the word"——

"Well, but I know you meant it; why won't you be candid now, doctor? But *had* you no other reason?"—Her eyes filled with tears.

"My dear Mrs St Helen! what *reason* could I possibly have?" I interrupted gravely—wishing to put an end to what threatened to become a very unpleasant discussion. "I have given you an answer to the strange question you asked; and now suppose"——

"Oh, doctor, it is useless to attempt putting me off in this way—I can read a look as well as any one. I must have been blind not to see yours. The fact is—I suppose"—she raised her handkerchief to her eyes, which were again beginning to glisten with tears—"if you would but be honest—did you not think I was wrong in waltzing, when my husband—is abroad—and—and—in danger?" She sobbed.

"Really, Mrs St Helen, you will persist in making my position here so unpleasant, that I must indeed take my leave." At that moment I heard the sound of a horse's feet approaching in the street. Mrs St Helen heard it too; and hurrying to the bell, pulled it with undisguised trepidation. As soon as the servant entered she said in a vehement tone, "Not at home! Not at home!" In spite of her efforts to conceal it, she trembled violently, and her face became paler than before. Determined to ascertain whether or not my sudden suspicions were correct, I rose, intending to walk to the window, when I expected to see Captain Alverley; but she prevented me, doubtless purposely—extending her arm towards me, and begging me to feel her pulse. So I was kept engaged till I heard the hall-door closed, after an evident parley, and the retreating of the equestrian visitor. I

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had been requested to call before *one* o'clock—it was now past two: had she engaged to ride out with Captain Alverley?

"Well, what do you think of my pulse, doctor?" inquired Mrs St Helen, breathing more freely, but still by no means calm.

"Why, it shows a high degree of nervous irritability and excitement, Mrs St Helen."

"Very probably; and no wonder! People are so cruel and so scandalous."—She burst into tears. "Here's my sister been lecturing me this hour—half-killing me! She insists"——

"Pray, restrain your feelings, Mrs St Helen! Why all this agitation? I am not your father confessor," said I, endeavouring to assume a gay air. Mrs St Helen paused, and sobbed heavily.

"She tells me that my behaviour is so—so light, that I am getting myself talked about."—She seemed exceedingly distressed. "Now, dear doctor, if you really love me, as a very, very old friend—I'm sure I love *you!*—do tell me, candidly, have *you* ever heard anything?"

"Never, Mrs St Helen, I solemnly assure you, have I heard your name mentioned to my knowledge, till last night, when I happened to overhear two ladies, who seemed to be wondering at your waltzing"——

"Oh," she interrupted me with great vivacity, "I know who they were! My cousins! My sweet, good-natured cousins—Oh, the vipers! Wherever I go they hiss at me! But I'll endure it no longer! I'll drive to —— Square this very day, and insist"——

"If you *do*, Mrs St Helen, and mention one syllable of what I have perhaps unguardedly told you, and what I could not help overhearing, we never meet again."

"Then what *am* I to do?" she exclaimed passionately. "Am I to endure all this? Must I suffer myself to be slandered with impunity!"

"God forbid, Mrs St Helen, that you should be slandered."

"Then, what am I to do?"

"Give no occasion," I answered, more dryly perhaps than I had intended.

"Give no occasion, indeed!" echoed Mrs St Helen with an indignant air, rising at the same time, and walking rapidly to and fro. "And who says, that I ever *have* given occasion?" fixing her bright eye upon me with a kind of defiance.

"Mrs St Helen, you greatly grieve and surprise me by all this. You ask me again and again for an answer to a very strange question, and when at length you get one, you are affronted with me for giving it. I declare that I know nothing whatever about your conduct, one way or the other. But since you have forced me to speak, very reluctantly—for I have no business to enter into any such matters—I can but repeat what I have said, that if the tongue of scandal and envy is busy with you, you must be extraordinarily on your guard to let your conduct give them the lie!"

"My dear doctor," said she, suddenly resuming her seat, and speaking in the sweetest and most sorrowful tone of voice, "I—I *will* be more guarded; I—I will not waltz again." Sobs prevented her going on. I took her hand cordially.

"I am delighted to hear you say so, Mrs St Helen. I know well your high honour, your purity of principle; but, believe me, your innocent unsuspecting frankness may yet expose you often to danger. Why may I not tell you the feelings of my heart, dear Mrs St Helen? they are towards you more those of a father than a friend or physician. You are young, why should I not tell you what you know—you are very beautiful;" she buried her face in her handkerchief, and sobbed almost convulsively. "The men of the world—of fashion—into whose way you have been lately so much thrown, are often very unprincipled and base; they may, with subtle wickedness, contrive snares for you that your innocent inexperience cannot detect till perhaps too late." She involuntarily squeezed my hand, for I still held hers, but attempted no reply. "Now, may I tell you what was really

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passing through my mind last night at Lady ——'s?" She spoke not, but continued her face in her handkerchief. "I was thinking that, perhaps at the moment you were being whirled round the room by that Captain Alverley, your gallant husband, charging at the head of his regiment, might be tumbling dead from his horse."

"Ah! and so did I the moment I saw you!" almost shrieked Mrs St Helen, suddenly raising her pallid face from the handkerchief in which it had been buried. I had the greatest difficulty in preventing her going off into violent hysterics. After a long struggle with her tumultuous feelings, "O Arthur, Arthur!" she exclaimed, in such a tone as brought the tears suddenly into my eyes—"if I have ever wronged you in thought, in word, or in deed!"——

"Impossible!—perfectly impossible!" I exclaimed with energy, in a cheerful exulting tone.

"No!" she exclaimed, sitting suddenly upright, while a noble expression beamed in her excited features, which were blanched with her vehement emotions. "No! I am his wife! I am the mother of his children! I have not betrayed them; I will not!"

I looked at her with astonishment; the wild smile passed quickly from her pallid, beautiful countenance, and she sunk back on the sofa in a swoon. I instantly summoned assistance, and her maid, with one or two other female servants, presently entered hastily with water and smelling-salts.

"I knew she was ill, sir," said her maid, Joyce! "she's not been quite herself, I may say, this several weeks. This constant going out at nights doesn't do for her, and I've often told her so, sir!"

"I suppose she goes out a great deal in the evenings?"

"Oh yes, sir; three or four times a-week, and oftener, sir."

"Is it generally late before she comes back?"

"Never hardly before three or four o'clock in the morning, sir; and so tired and knocked up, as one may say"——Here Mrs St Helen began to revive. She seemed very much annoyed, when she had thoroughly recovered her consciousness, at being surrounded by the servants. After giving her a few directions—for she was suffering slightly from a cold—I left, promising to call upon her again in a day or two.

*Three or four times a-week, and oftener!* The words rung in my ears long after Mrs St Helen was out of my sight. Was this the same woman that had once inquired with such a passionate air, whether Colonel St Helen ever thought of *her* and her children, when he was going to the field, and surrounded by death? How would that gallant heart of his have been wrung at such a moment, had he known in what manner she conducted herself during his absence! Despite what had recently passed between us, I trembled for Mrs St Helen: I knew not how far she might be already committed—to what extent her light and thoughtless behaviour might have given encouragement to those ever ready to take advantage of such conduct: her emotions had been violent, and were no doubt genuine; and yet the agonies I had been witnessing might have been little else than the mere spasms of declining virtue!

Of Captain Alverley—the *Honourable* Charles Alverley—I regret that I should have to speak at any length. But I must—he is one of the main figures in this painful picture—he is the Destroyer. He belonged to a high family; was a well-educated and accomplished man—of handsome person and an irresistible address; yet, nevertheless, as heartless a villain as ever existed. He was a systematic seducer. The fair sex he professed to idolise; yet he could not look upon them but with a lustful and corrupting eye. He was proverbial for his gallantries; he made everything subservient to them. His character was well known, and yet, alas! he was everywhere esteemed in society, in whose thoughtless parlance he was a gentleman! Who could resist the gay,



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the bland, the graceful Alverley, with his coronet in expectation?

Why—asks one, in happy ignorance of the world about him, is such a wretch created, and suffered to infest the fairest regions of humanity? It might as well be asked, why has the Almighty created the cobra or the crocodile!

Captain Alverley, as already intimated, had excited a strong interest in Miss Annesley's heart before she had ever seen or heard of Colonel St Helen. Having discovered her want of fortune, he withdrew, on the plea already mentioned, from the competition for her hand; but he never lost sight of her. He had, in fact, determined, come what would, on effecting the ruin of Mrs St Helen; and he set to work patiently, and, as he often considered, *scientifically*. It has been supposed—though with what truth I know not—that he had something or other to do with poor Colonel St Helen's summons upon foreign service; and the moment that he had sailed, the fiend commenced his operations. They were long retarded, however, by the strictly secluded life Mrs St Helen led at Densleigh, occupied with her holy and happy maternal duties. Would to Heaven that she had never quitted the one, or been diverted, even for a moment, from the performance of the other! The accidental rencontre at the Horse-Guards I have already mentioned. The instant that he was commissioned by his royal master to bear a kind message to Mrs St Helen, he determined upon the demeanour he should assume—one at once delicate and deferential—fraught with sympathy for her evident suffering. Observing her agitation, he did not attempt, by a look or a word, to remind her that they had ever met before; confining himself, with perfect taste, to the delivery of the message with which he had been charged. When Mrs St Helen abruptly drove off, in the manner already described, his vile heart leaped for joy. His practised eye saw that her agitation was not *entirely* attributable to the errand on which she had come. He certainly had remained standing in the manner Mrs Ogilvie had described, but it was not in astonishment; he was pondering what had just happened; and in a few moments returned to the room he had quitted, with a flush on his countenance, and the consciousness that he had commenced his infernal campaign. Some six or eight months afterwards, a packet arrived at the Horse-Guards from India, enclosing a letter, which the writer, Colonel St Helen, begged might be thrown into the post for Mrs St Helen. Of this, however, Captain Alverley took charge, and that very afternoon rode down to Densleigh, and delivered it with his own hands into those of the servant —"with Captain Alverley's compliments"—when he rode off. He justly considered that his delicacy in doing so could not but be appreciated. It was so!

Had Mrs St Helen then closely and faithfully examined her heart, in order to ascertain the exact nature of her feelings on finding that Captain Alverley had himself brought her a letter with the immediate receipt of which he supposed she would be so much gratified, and that he had abstained from personally delivering it;—had she done *this*, her terror-stricken eye might have detected the serpent, dim-glistening in dreadful beauty, beneath the concealing foliage—and her sudden shudder would have been her salvation. But she did not—she could not. Not hers was the salutary habit or the power of self-examination; not hers, alas! had been the blessed vigilance of a fond, an experienced, and a virtuous mother, exercised over her young years!—Already, in the sight of God, had commenced the guilt of Mrs St Helen, who yet nevertheless was unconscious of the presence or approach of evil, even in thought. But why? Because of her fatal remissness in guarding the "approaches of her heart." Had she *then* asked help from Heaven, she might have perceived the danger which nothing but Heaven's light could have detected. "The tempter," says an old divine, "is then ever nighest, when we think him far-

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thest off." Yes, a subtle poison had already been imperceptibly infused, in infinitely small quantity, it may be, into the heart of Mrs St Helen—a poison of slow but inevitable operation. *O woman, this is the point of danger!* I repeat it, that, harsh and unjust as it may appear, from the moment alluded to, Mrs St Helen became an accomplice in effecting her own ruin. Not that she had as yet sensibly or consciously suffered any injury; the *wife* and the *mother* were still supreme in Mrs St Helen; her quick and ardent feelings knew as yet of no other objects, no other outlets, than these. O, unhappy woman! why was it that when you beheld Captain Alverley approaching to bring you the intelligence of your husband's triumphs, you trembled? Why was that faint flutter at your heart? Had not *I* already communicated all he came to tell? What feelings flitted through your bosom when, leaning against the window, you followed his retiring figure? Ought not the conscious difference between the feelings with which you were disposed to regard him, and *me*—or any other indifferent person—to have sounded the alarm, in your husband's name, in every chamber of your heart? Ill-fated woman! dare you appeal to Heaven to testify *all* the feelings with which you heard of quitting Densleigh for London? Were you even reluctant to take that step because of your dislike to encounter Alverley? Would you avow the gratification with which you found yourself becoming intimate with his distinguished family? Alas! did you not feel a secret satisfaction at finding yourself sitting at Lord ——'s dinner-table, with Captain Alverley beside you? Had not your perception of right and wrong been suddenly confused and disturbed, how could you tolerate his altered demeanour towards you? Were you delighted, or startled at the ardent glance with which he regarded you? Did you not observe and tremblingly appreciate the tact with which attentions, exquisitely flattering and gratifying to *you*, were concealed from all others? Did a sense of security from observation begin to evince itself when you perceived the skill with which his infernal movements were directed? What alteration of feeling did not all this imply? Dreadful questions—how clearly does your disinclination to answer them, indicate the nature of the change you are undergoing!

Mrs St Helen had not been in London half a year, before Captain Alverley felt that he was triumphing—that his long-continued and deeply-laid schemes were conducting him to success. The first—the very first step, he had felt to be everything; it had gained him an interest, however faint, in her feelings, and he cherished it with the most exquisite skill, the most watchful assiduity. He kept *himself* ever in the background. He would excite her feelings with his generous and eloquent eulogies of Colonel St Helen's conduct abroad; in the middle of one of them he suddenly became confused, heaved a faint sigh, and resumed his conversation with ill-disguised embarrassment. He busied himself—he took infinite pains—at least he led her to think so—in procuring the return home of Colonel St Helen; thus, in short, and in a thousand other ways, he at length disarmed Mrs St Helen by lulling her suspicions, or rather preventing their being excited. Consummately skilled in the workings of the female heart, he guided his conduct according to the indications he discovered. In handing her one night to her carriage from the opera, he made a point of insulting a gentleman, who, with a lady on his arm, was hurrying on before Captain Alverley and Mrs St Helen. A hurried whisper between the two gentlemen satisfied Mrs St Helen that there was mischief in preparation. "For Heaven's sake!" she whispered, in excessive trepidation—but he gently forced her into the carriage, and permitted it to drive off without his uttering a word. He gained his end. The evening papers of the ensuing day duly announced an "affair of honour" between the "Marquis of * * * * *," attended by, &c., and Captain A. B. C., attended, &c. "The meeting arose

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out of an alleged affront offered by the noble Marquis to a young and beautiful lady, &c., &c., whom the Captain was conducting to her carriage," &c. &c. Very strange to say, neither party did the other any harm!—Captain Alverley, on the next opera night, found his way to her box.

"Captain Alverley! how *could* you" —commenced Mrs St Helen, very earnestly.

"My dear Mrs St Helen!" was the only reply, with a look that none could give but Captain Alverley. The skilful strategist knew the amount of his gain, and was in ecstasies.

In the progress of "the affair," Captain Alverley's next step was to accustom Mrs St Helen to hear herself called a flirt, and to have his name, on such occasions, always judiciously coupled with hers. The first time that ever she waltzed with him—which he justly regarded as an open triumph—was in consequence of a very heated altercation she had had with Mrs Ogilvie, who had freely charged her with culpable lightness of conduct with reference to Captain Alverley; the consequence of which was, that Mrs St Helen went, as she had angrily threatened, to a ball, where, casting a look of defiance at her sister-in-law, she instantly accepted Captain Alverley's invitation, infinitely to his astonishment. He saw his position, and behaved with prudence. After one or two rounds, he led her, with an air of the properest deference in the world, to a seat, and paid her no marked attentions whatever during the evening. He perceived that her lynx-eyed sister watched his every movement; and for upwards of a fortnight he suspended all but the most ordinary and casual civilities and attentions to Mrs St Helen. Why did not the infatuated woman at once break through all the meshes with which she was now conscious of being surrounded? Why did no sudden alarm of virtue—no heaven-inspired strength—enable her to "flee like a bird from the snare of the fowler?" Alas, that I should have to write it! *She did not now wish to do so.* Not that yet even she contemplated the idea of positive guilt—vastly far from it. She was so conscious of her own strength, as to prevent all apprehensions on *that* score. It is true she was occasionally sensible, with a heart-flutter and cheek suffused, of an interest in Captain Alverley, that was inconsistent with the undivided affection due to her husband; she went not further consciously, but how far was this!—She consoled herself with the notion that it was certainly rather coquettish—and that was almost universal. The plain truth was, she began to indulge towards Captain Alverley feelings which she no longer dared to scrutinise. Her vanity, again, would not suffer her to part with so gay and dazzling a follower—"and she was surely able to take care of herself!"

Once or twice I called upon Mrs St Helen, in pursuance of the promise I made, but without seeing her, as she had just gone out. This might, or it might not be true. If she was denying herself to me, it must have been on account of what had taken place on the occasion alluded to; and was it that she was ashamed of her frankness—of the extent of her admissions, or that she regretted having made them from other considerations? I was driving, one afternoon, through the Park, on my way to a patient near Cumberland Gate, when I happened to overtake the open carriage of Mrs St Helen driving very slowly, she being in conversation with an equestrian who walked his horse alongside—and I soon detected in him Captain Alverley. I perceived with a hurried look in passing, that she was listening intently to what he was saying—looking down, and slightly colouring. I felt sick at heart for her! The next time that I saw her at home, she seemed very calm, and sensibly colder in her manner towards me than I had ever seen her before. She made not—nor of course did I—the slightest allusion to our late deeply interesting conversation. In answer to my inquiries, she said that she was in very good health, except that she did not now sleep so soundly as heretofore, and her appetite had also declined—the usual

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consequences, I told her, of a life of London dissipation—of irregular hours, excitement, and fatigue.

"As I feel rather solitary in this large house," said she, "I have invited a Miss Churchill, a distant relation of the colonel's, to pay me a visit. She's a very sweet, good girl, and I have no doubt we shall be inseparable." While she said this a slight colour mounted into her cheek, which set me speculating upon what she had just told me. Was, then, her summons to Miss Churchill *a signal of distress?* Was it that she began to feel her danger—that she wished a protector—some one who should be indeed, as she said, inseparable from her—ever by her side—whose presence might check, if not prevent, the increasing ardour and attentions of Captain Alverley? Faint effort of endangered virtue!—But it *was* an effort, and I rejoiced to see it made.

"When do you propose leaving town?" I inquired.

"Leaving town!" she exclaimed quickly—"why, dear doctor, *should* I leave town? The season not yet at its height even! Besides, I hate the country—I never heartily liked it."

"I thought, Mrs St Helen"——

"Oh yes!" she interrupted hastily, "I know what you mean; Densleigh was certainly a pleasant place enough, but we've lost it." She paused for a moment, and added—"but I suppose that about August we must go down somewhere or other"——

"The sea air will do wonders for you, and for the children."

"Yes—I dare say it would," she replied, with rather an indifferent air—"but at present they are very well; I always have them taken to the Park—and where can there be a finer air?" Here some visitors were announced, the servant at the same time laying down six or seven notes and cards of invitation upon one of the tables.

About a month afterwards, I received the following note from Mrs St Helen:—

"Dear Doctor,—Will you call in here in the course of the morning, to see one of the children, who, I fear, is poorly? Jones tells me she thinks it is the measles. I hope it is not anything worse—the scarlet fever, for instance, or small-pox. But you can soon tell. I shall wait at home for you till two.

"Ever yours,
"E. St Helen.

"P.S.—I have never had either of these horrid complaints myself, and feel rather nervous.

—— Street, 10 o'clock."

What a dismal contrast this note afforded, I thought, laying it down with a sigh, to the eager, alarmed summons she had sent on a former occasion, on a most trifling, or rather imaginary emergency, from Densleigh! A little after two o'clock I was at —— Street, and was shown up immediately into the nursery. Mrs St Helen's pony phaeton was at the door, and she was sitting, ready dressed for a drive, on the corner of the bed on which lay her younger child. Her handkerchief, saturated with Eau de Cologne, was every now and then lifted to her face, as though she dreaded infection. She looked very beautiful—her dress infinitely became her—and she did not seem particularly agitated.

"I was beginning to get fidgety, doctor; I was afraid I should not see you," said she, rising to meet me. I assured her that I had been unexpectedly detained. "And what do you think of the little love? I was afraid he was ailing a little yesterday—his eyes looked very heavy yesterday evening, didn't they, Jones?" turning to the maid.

"Yes, ma'am," she replied eagerly, directing an affectionate and anxious look to the child. "You may recollect, ma'am, I asked you yesterday afternoon, if we hadn't better send for"——

"Oh yes—I dare say—I think you did, Jones," interrupted Mrs St Helen quickly, and with rather a displeased air. "Jones is always terrified with every change in the child's face! But do you think there is anything really the matter, doctor?"

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After a little examination, I told her that I thought the child was sickening for the measles.

"Is he indeed, sweet little lamb!"—she exclaimed, looking really kindly at the child. "You don't think it's scarlet fever, now?" after a moment's pause, turning anxiously towards me, and gently agitating her fragrant handkerchief.

"No," I replied—"at present I think it is decidedly the measles."

"Measles are not dangerous, are they?"

"La, ma'am!" interrupted Jones, who was kneeling at the side of the bed, near the child—her eyes filling with tears—"excuse me, ma'am, but my poor sister's child died of them only a twelvemonth ago."

"Oh, nonsense, Jones,—why do you try to alarm me in this way? There's no such *very* great danger, doctor, is there?"—turning towards me with more interest in her manner than she had hitherto manifested.

"I sincerely hope not! At present, I can assure you there is every appearance of its being a mild attack."

"Only feel how hot his little hand is, ma'am!" said Jones.

Mrs St Helen did not remove her gloves, but said to me—"Of course, he is rather feverish just now!"

After giving a few directions concerning the temperature of the room, his food, and one or two other little matters, I left, and descended to the drawing-room, to write a prescription.

"I shall return home by four, Jones," said Mrs St Helen, also quitting the room, and following me—"be sure you pay him every attention—Don't remove your eyes from him for a moment!"

"I'm quite delighted to find there's no danger, doctor," said she, seating herself beside me, as I began to write.

"Indeed, my dear madam," I replied, determined not to let matters pass so very easily, "we must not be too sanguine. There are two forms of measles—the one a mild, the other very malignant. At present, I cannot undertake to say with certainty which of the two it is." She continued silent for a few moments.—"I think I told you, in my note, that I believed I had never had the measles?—Are they really catching from a child to a grown up person?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Heavens!—I—I'll have pastiles burnt all over the house all day! Dear me! it would be dreadful if *I* were to catch it—because" (she added hastily) "of dear little Arthur!"

"Well, we must hope for the best," said I, quietly folding up my prescription, and requesting that it might be sent to the druggist's without delay; and hastily taking my leave, with a countenance that, had she been as sensitive as in former times, she might perceive somewhat clouded with disapprobation. Was the mother's heart, then, already so dulled towards her suffering offspring? Could I doubt the selfish nature of her anxieties? What infernal change had come over her? Why did she not instantly order back her carriage, undress, and betake herself to the only place that then became her—the bedside of her child! But it was otherwise. A few minutes after I had quitted, she stepped into her carriage, and drove into the Park. At my suggestion the elder child, Arthur, was sent off immediately to Mrs Ogilvie's, who resided somewhere in the neighbourhood of Chelsea; and I continued in daily attendance upon little George for about a week, during which time the symptoms were of the milder description, and I anticipated the speedy recovery of my little patient. Mrs St Helen, whenever I was present, evidently—at least I was uncharitable enough to admit the idea—*acted* the fond mother, *appearing* deeply interested in the progress of her child through his little perils. I had reason to believe, from one or two little circumstances that fell under my observation, that she did not withdraw from the world of pleasure. The constant attendants upon little George were—not his mother—but Miss Churchill and his nursery-maid, Jones, both of them most anxious and affectionate nurses—as, indeed, I heard Mrs St Helen herself, in the blandest way,

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acknowledge. Well, indeed, she might, having thus devolved the chiefest of her maternal duties upon the companion she had invited to partake of her pleasures only.

I think it was about ten days after I had first been called in to attend upon little St Helen, that I was suddenly summoned, about eight o'clock in the evening, to —— Street, with the intelligence that he had become very suddenly worse, and that Miss Churchill was much alarmed. Thither I repaired as quickly as possible, and found that appearances justified her apprehensions. There was every symptom of the accession of the malignant form of measles. He had just had a fit of spasms, and was now breathing hard and quickly, and scorched up with fever. The symptoms were certainly serious.

"You must not, however, be too much alarmed, Mrs St Helen," said I, hastily turning round—forgetting, at the moment, that she, the most interested, was not present. The child had been going on as well as usual —rapidly recovering, in fact, till six o'clock that evening; about which time Mrs St Helen, after making particular inquiries about the child, went off to dinner at Lady ——'s, where she had ordered the carriage to call for her about nine, and convey her to the opera. In their fright, Miss Churchill and the servants forgot all this, and instinctively sent off for me. After giving such directions as appeared proper, I quitted the room, beckoning out for a moment Miss Churchill.

"Dear, sweet little love! I'm afraid he's *very* ill," she exclaimed, much agitated, and bursting into tears, as she stepped with me for a moment into another room. I acknowledged to her that I considered the child to be in dangerous circumstances; "Have you sent after Mrs St Helen? she *ought* to be here."

"Dear! we have been all so flurried —but we'll inquire," she replied, running down stairs before me. "I really don't think she's been sent for—but I will immediately. Let me see—nine o'clock. She'll be at the opera by this time.

"Then I will drive thither immediately, as my carriage is here, and bring her back with me. It will not do to alarm her too suddenly, and in such a place. Let me see; on which side of the house is her box?"

"Number ——, on the left hand side of the stage. I think, at least, that you will find her in that box, which is the Duchess of ——'s, and she called here to-day to offer it to Mrs St Helen." I drove off immediately, and had a twofold object in doing so—to acquaint her as soon as possible with an event of such serious importance as the dangerous illness of her child, and to endeavour, in doing so, to startle her out of the infatuation into which I feared she had fallen—to remind her again of the high and holy duties she was beginning to disregard. The sight of her dying child would rouse, I thought, the smothered feelings of the mother, and those would soon excite an agonising recollection of her distant husband. On arriving at the opera-house, I made my way, in my hurry, to the wrong side. I went into one or two empty boxes before I discovered my mistake; and when at length I perceived it, I determined to stay for a few moments where I was, and endeavour to see what was going on in the Duchess of ——'s box. There sat, sure enough, in the corner of the box, her face directed towards the stage, Mrs St Helen, dressed with her usual elegance, and looking extremely beautiful. Her left hand slowly moved about her fan, and she was evidently occasionally conversing with some one standing far back in the box. I contemplated her with real anguish, when I thought of her husband—*if, indeed, she were not now a widow*—and of, perhaps, her dying child. My heart almost failed me, and I began to regret having undertaken the painful duty which had brought me where I was. I stretched myself as far forward as I could, to discover, if possible, who was in the box with her, but in vain. Whoever it was that she was talking to—her

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fan now and then fluttering hurriedly—he, or she, kept as far out of sight as possible. Just as I was quitting my post of observation, however, a sudden motion of a red arm, displaying the feather of an officer's cap, satisfied me that her companion was the execrable Alverley. I now felt an additional repugnance to go through with what I had undertaken; but I hurried round to the other side of the house, and soon stood at the door of the duchess's box. I knocked, and it was immediately opened—by Captain Alverley.

"Is Mrs St Helen here?" I whispered. He bowed stiffly, and admitted me. Mrs St Helen, on seeing me, reddened violently. Rising from her seat, and approaching me, she suddenly grew pale, for she could not but perceive that my features were somewhat discomposed.

"Good God! doctor, what brings you here?" she inquired, with increasing trepidation.

"Permit me to ask, sir," said Captain Alverley, interposing with an air of haughty curiosity, "whether anything has happened to justify the alarm which Mrs St Helen"——

"I don't wish you to be frightened," said I, addressing her, without noticing her companion, or what he had said—I could not overcome my repugnance to him—"but I think you had better return home with me; my carriage is waiting for you."

"O my child! my child!" she exclaimed faintly, sinking into her seat again; "*what* has happened, for God's sake?"

"He is rather worse—suddenly worse—but I think he was better again before I left." She looked eagerly at me, while her countenance seemed blanched to the hue of the white dress she wore. She began to breathe shortly and hurriedly; and I was glad that the loud and merry music which was playing, would, in some measure, drown the shriek I every moment expected her to utter. I succeeded, however, with Captain Alverley's assistance, in conveying her to my carriage, which I ordered on to —— Street as fast as possible, for Mrs St Helen's excitement threatened to become violent. She sobbed hysterically. "What a cruel, cruel wretch I have been," she murmured in broken accents, "to be at the—the opera—when my darling is—dying!"

"Come, come, Mrs St Helen, it is useless to afflict yourself with vain reproaches. You thought, as we all thought, that he was recovering fast, when you set off."

"Oh, but I should never—never have left his bedside! Oh, if I should lose him! I shall never be able to look my"—— Thus she proceeded, till, overcome with exhaustion, she leaned back, sobbing heavily. As we entered the street in which she lived, she whispered, with evidently a great effort to overcome her agitation, "Dearest doctor—I see—I know what you must think—but I assure you—I—I—Captain Alverley had but that moment come into the box, quite unexpectedly to me, and I was extremely vexed and annoyed."

I was glad that the carriage-stopping spared me the pain of replying to her. Miss Churchill came running to the carriage, as soon as the hall door had been opened—and almost received Mrs St Helen into her arms—for she could hardly stand, her agitation became so suddenly increased.

"Emma—Emma! I do assure you he is better—much—a great deal better!" said Miss Churchill, hurrying her along the hall.

"O Jane—I shall die!—I am very ill! I cannot bear it—can you forgive me?"

"Hush! hush! what nonsense you are talking—you rave!" exclaimed Miss Churchill, as we forced Mrs St Helen into the dining-room, where it was some time before she was restored to anything like a calmness. Mr ——, the well-known apothecary, coming at length into the room to take his departure, strenuously assured us that the child was very greatly relieved, and that he did not now apprehend danger. This I was happy in being able to corroborate, after having stepped up-stairs to satisfy my own anx-

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iety; and I left her for the night, hoping, but faintly, that a great effort had been made to snap asunder the infernal bands in which Satan, in the shape of Alverley, had bound her. It seemed, however, as though my hopes were justified; for morning, noon, and night beheld Mrs St Helen at her child's bedside—his zealous, watchful, and loving attendant—for upwards of a week. She gave him all his medicine; with her own hands rendered him all the little services his situation required; ordered a peremptory "not at home" to be answered to all comers except Mrs Ogilvie; and doubtless banished from her busied bosom all thoughts of Captain Alverley!

The morning after I had brought her home, as I have described, from the opera, on stepping into my carriage, I saw some paper lying between the cushions of the seat. Supposing it to be some memorandum or other of my own, I took it up, and with unutterable feelings read the following, hastily written in pencil!—

"Will you, angel! condemn me to a distant admiration of your solitary beauty? I am here fretting in old ——'s box; for mercy's sake rescue me. Only look down and nod, when you have read this, at ——'s box—I shall understand—and, rely upon it, will not abuse your kindness." * *

I tore it with fury into a hundred fragments, and then, recollecting myself, regretted that I had not enclosed it to Mrs St Helen in an envelope, with "my compliments," so that she might be sensible of the extent to which I was aware of her guilty secrets. Could there be now any doubt in my mind of the nature of the attentions this villain was paying Mrs St Helen, and which she permitted? On reading this infernal missive, she must have "*looked and nodded*," and so summoned the fiend to her side. And now I recollected the falsehood she had had presence of mind enough, in the midst of all her agitation, to invent, in order to explain away his being with her—that it was "unexpected" to her, and "vexed and annoyed" her. I long debated with myself whether I should communicate to her the nature of the discovery I had made; but at length, for many reasons, thought it better to take no notice of it. I looked at her with totally different feelings to those with which I had ever before regarded her. I felt as if her presence polluted the chamber of suffering innocence. Her uncommon beauty had thenceforth no attractions for my eye; I felt no gratification in her gentle and winning manners. I did not regret the arrival of the day fixed for both the children, accompanied by herself, to go to the sea-side; it would relieve me from the presence of one whose perfidious conduct daily excited my indignation and disgust.

She returned from the sea-side, I understood, as soon as she had seen her children settled; I say understood, for I had no direct knowledge of the fact. She gave me no intimation either of the safe arrival of her children at the sea-side, or of her own return, or how they were going on. On our casually meeting in Oxford Street she certainly nodded, as our carriages met, but it was not the cordial recognition which I had been accustomed to receive from her. I saw that she did not look in good health—her face seemed clouded with anxiety. As, however, she had vouchsafed me no intimation of her return to town beyond the sudden and casual recognition just mentioned, of course I abstained from calling upon her. I wondered whether it had ever occurred to her as being possible that the note received from Alverley had been dropped in my carriage, and so come under my notice? She might have recollected that she did not destroy it, but rather, perhaps, determined *not* to destroy it; she might have asked Captain Alverley if he had seen it—they might have searched the opera-box—and then Mrs St Helen's guilty soul might have alarmed and worried her with the possibility that such a document might have found its way into my hands;—*and if it had*, could I

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then do nothing to extricate her from the perilous circumstances in which I conceived her to be placed? What right had I to interfere, however keen my suspicions, however sincere my attachment to her—as she was—and to her husband? But might I not endeavour to communicate with General or Mrs Ogilvie on the subject? Yet I knew nothing whatever of him, and her I had seen but seldom, and only at Mrs St Helen's; and besides, from the evident recrimination that I had interrupted between the sisters-in-law on a former occasion, it was plain that Mrs Ogilvie must be aware of the light conduct of Mrs St Helen—probably she knew and feared far more than I—and so my communication would not appear incredible. Still it might be taken ill—and I resolved not to attempt so dangerous an experiment.

As for anonymous letters, that odious system was my abhorrence. Suppose I were to write directly to Mrs St Helen, braving all chances, and faithfully expostulating with her on the dreadful course upon which she was too evidently bent; but with what benefit had my former attempts been attended? Suppose she should return my letter with indignation, or even, in a fever of fury, lay it before Captain Alverley? So, seeing no possible way of interfering successfully between the victim and the destroyer, I withdrew from the painful spectacle, and endeavoured to discharge it from my thoughts. Still, however, in my intercourse with society, I was from time to time pained by hearing rumours of the most distressing description concerning the degree of intimacy subsisting between Captain Alverley and Mrs St Helen. Scandal was indeed busy with their names, which at length found their way into the papers of the day. Could, for instance, the following be mistaken?—"The *eccentric* conduct of the lovely wife of a very gallant officer, is beginning to attract much notice in the *beau monde*. It is rumoured to have been such as to call forth an intimation from a *very high quarter*," &c. &c.; while in one or two less scrupulous newspapers her name, connected with that of Captain Alverley, was mentioned in the coarsest and most disgusting terms.

Alas, poor Colonel St Helen! if, indeed, the chances of war had yet spared you, was this the fond and lovely wife you left in such an agony of grief—the mother of your children—she to whom you had confided so much—from whom you were expecting so enthusiastic a welcome after all your brave, and dangerous, and glorious toils? Better would it be for you to fall gloriously before yon grisly array of muskets—amidst the bellowing of your country's cannon, than survive to meet the dismal scenes which seem preparing for you!

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Alas, that I should have to record it! Mrs St Helen at length grew so reckless—the consequence of her infamous conduct became so evident, that even some of the less fastidious of the circles in which she moved, found it necessary to exclude her. Public propriety could not be so outraged with impunity.

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It was a lovely Sunday morning in May 18—, on which, returning from an early visit to a patient in the neighbourhood of Kensington, I ordered the coachman to walk his horses, that I might enjoy the balmy freshness of everything around, and point out to my little son, who had accompanied me for the drive's sake, the beauty of Hyde Park, at that point leading off to Kensington Gardens. I could almost have imagined myself fifty miles off in the country. The sun shone serenely out of the blue expanse above, upon the bright green shrubs and trees, yet cool and fresh with the morning dew. With the exception of one gentleman who had cantered past us a few minutes before, and a tidy old country-looking dame, sitting on one of the benches to rest herself from a long walk to town, we encountered no one. My little chatterer was making some sagacious observations upon the height and number of the trees in Kensington Gardens, when a rumbling

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heavy noise indicated the approach of a vehicle at a rapid rate. It proved to be a chariot-and-four, coming towards us in the direction of Cumberland Gate—tearing along as fast as the postilions could urge their horses. The side-blinds were drawn down, but those in front were up, and enabled me to see—Mrs St Helen and Captain Alverley! She was evidently violently agitated, her white dress seemed to have been put on in haste and disorder, her hair was dishevelled—she was wringing her hands, and weeping passionately. He was so absorbed with his attempts to pacify her, as not to have observed me. I drew my breath with difficulty for some moments, the shock of such a dreadful apparition had been so sudden. It seemed as though I had met Satan hurrying away with a fallen angel!

So, then, this was her ELOPEMENT that I had been fated to see! Yes, the final step had been taken which separated that miserable and guilty being for ever from all that was honourable, virtuous, precious in life; which plunged her into infamy irretrievable; —and her husband—her children!—Fiend, thou *hadst* triumphed!

My exhilaration of spirits, occasioned by the beauty and calmness of the morning, instantly disappeared. It seemed as though a cloud darkened the heavens, and filled my soul with oppressive gloom. "Papa!" exclaimed my little son, rousing me from the reverie into which I had fallen—"what are you thinking about? Are you sorry for that lady and gentleman? I wonder who they are? Why was she crying? Is she ill, do you think?" His questions at length attracted my attention; but I could not answer him, for he reminded me of little Arthur St Helen, who was just about his age! Poor children! Innocent offspring of an infamous mother, what is to become of you? What direful associations will ever hereafter hang around the name you bear!

About eleven o'clock I drove through —— Street, and on approaching Mrs St Helen's house perceived indications, even in the street, of something unusual having happened. On drawing up at the door—for I determined to call, if only to mention what I had seen—I saw that there were several persons in the drawing-room, evidently agitated. The servant who opened the door seemed quite bewildered. I was requested to walk up-stairs as soon as he had taken up my name, and soon found myself in the drawing-room, in the presence of Miss Churchill, General and Mrs Ogilvie, the Earl and Countess of Hetheringham, and several other relatives and connections of Colonel and Mrs St Helen. They were all evidently labouring under great excitement. Mrs Ogilvie was perfectly frantic, walking to and fro, and wringing her hands, the picture of despair. I addressed myself first to Miss Churchill, who stood nearest me. She took my hand, but suddenly quitted it, overcome with her feelings, and turned away.

"My dear countess," said I, approaching the Countess of Hetheringham, who was sitting on the sofa, conversing with a lady, her handkerchief now and then raised towards her eyes, but her manner being still somewhat stately and composed—"I fear I can guess what has happened!" taking a chair opposite to her.

"*Eloped*, doctor! she has, positively!—We are all thunderstruck," she answered in a low tone, but with her usual deliberation. "We were preparing to go to church when the painful news reached us. We came off hither, and have been here ever since. I have not told any of my daughters."

"Her companion, I suppose"—

"Of course, that wretch Captain Alverley. It is a pity he is to succeed to the title and estates. The earl, by the way, talks of calling him out, and so forth. I'll take care he does no such thing, however. Don't you think General Ogilvie should do so, if any one?"

"How and when did she go?" I inquired, affecting not to hear her last observations. "I called to say that I suspected what has happened, since I met them this morning early in the Park."——

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"Herbert!" exclaimed the countess, in a less drawling tone than usual, addressing the Earl of Hetheringham, who was conversing with General Ogilvie and another gentleman in a low earnest tone at the further end of the room—"Dr —— says that he met the fugitives this morning in the Park."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the earl earnestly, as they all three approached us. I told them what I had seen—and they listened in silence.

"Do you think we could mention the affair at the Horse-Guards?" inquired the earl, turning to General Ogilvie. "I have a great mind to call on the commander-in-chief to-morrow, and represent the infamous conduct of his *aide-de-camp* towards a distinguished brother officer!" The general and his companion shook their heads, and the three presently walked away again to a distant part of the drawing-room, where they appeared to resume the conversation which the countess's summons had interrupted.

"To tell you the truth, doctor," she continued, "I am not much surprised at her turning out in this way"——

"Heavens, countess! you astonish me"——

"Her father, you know," continued the frigid countess, "was a very so-so kind of character; and gave her no sort of proper education. I have had *my* daughters educated in the strictest possible way—quite under my own eye! Mrs St Helen I tried to train when she was with us for a short time, but it was useless. I soon saw it was in vain; and she did my daughters no good while she was with them, I assure you."

"Why, surely, countess, you never saw anything improper in her conduct while she was under your care?"

"Oh, why, yes—I mean, not perhaps, exactly; but, to be sure, the girl's head was quite turned with the nonsense the men talked to her, as they do to every new girl—they thought her pretty!" She paused, but I only bowed.

"'Tis a sad thing for *us*, doctor, is it not?" resumed the countess. "The papers will take care to get hold of it, because of her relationship to *us*—it is really most unpleasant!" At this moment, a servant entered and whispered to Miss Churchill, and she, followed by Mrs Ogilvie, presently quitted the room. "I dare say that is some message about the children," said the countess, in the same passionless tone and manner she had hitherto preserved—"how I pity *them*, by the way! Poor things, it will be always flung in their teeth; they'll feel the greatest difficulty in settling in life—I quite feel for them!" sighing gently. "I suppose, by the way, the colonel will find no difficulty, if he should live to return to England, in obtaining a divorce? But then the exposure is so great!" How long the countess would have gone on in this strain, I know not; I was heartily tired of it—it seemed, so to speak, utterly *out of tune;* so I rose and bowed, saying I wished to see Mrs Ogilvie before I left, as she and Miss Churchill seemed extremely excited and hysterical.

"You will not mention this affair more than you can help, doctor!" said the countess with great dignity.

"Rely on my prudence," I replied carelessly, and quitted the room, perfectly wearied out and disgusted with the tone and spirit in which such a dreadful matter was discussed by one who ought to have felt a most painful interest in it. I directed a servant to show me to the room whither Mrs Ogilvie and Miss Churchill had gone; and was, within a few moments, ushered into the boudoir. How my heart ached, as I hastily cast my eye over the numerous little elegancies scattered tastefully about the room; and especially when it fell upon a beautiful full-length crayon sketch of Mrs St Helen, which hung upon the wall!

"Oh, wretch!" exclaimed Mrs Ogilvie, observing my eye fixed upon it; and walking hastily up to it, she stood for a few moments with her arms stretched out towards it; and then, burying her face in her hands, wept as if her heart would break. I rose, and turned the picture with its face to the wall.

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"My brother! my brave and noble-hearted brother!" sobbed Mrs Ogilvie, and sunk, overpowered with her feelings, into a seat.

"Where *is* my mamma?" kept continually inquiring little Arthur St Helen, whom Miss Churchill was clasping affectionately in her arms, while her tears fell like rain upon his little head. He was the image of his beautiful—fallen mother.

"She's gone, gone, my love! You will never see her again!" she murmured.

"But I'll go and fetch her, if you will only tell me where she is." Miss Churchill wept, but made no reply.

"Why do you turn mamma's picture round in that way?" he inquired, looking at me with a haughty air—one that most strongly reminded me of his guilty mother. "I love my mamma very dearly, and you shall not do so!" Miss Churchill kissed him with passionate fervour, but made him no reply. Mrs Ogilvie rose, and beckoning me to follow her, quitted the boudoir, and stepped into the room adjoining. "Oh, doctor! of all the dreadful scenes you have ever seen, can anything equal this? I would rather—indeed I would—have followed both my brother and his wife to the grave, than lived to see this day!—My dear—brave—fond—generous—betrayed brother—read it! read it, if you can! It has quite broken my heart!" and hastily snatching a letter from her bosom, she thrust it into my hands, telling me that Mrs St Helen had received it only late last night, and in her hurried flight, which it had perhaps occasioned, had left it upon the floor of her dressing-room. The letter was from Colonel St Helen to Mrs St Helen; and was quite damp—it might be with the tears of agony that had fallen from those who had read it. It was as follows:—

"Malta, April 10, 18—.

"My sweet Emma! Still two thousand envious miles are between us! Oh, that I had an angel's wing to fly to you in a moment! But, alas! that is what I have been wishing a thousand and a thousand times since I left you—four long years ago. My lovely Emma! idol of my heart, and shall we indeed be ere long reunited? Shall I again clasp my dear beautiful Emma in my arms—never, never again to be separated? Dearest! a thousand times the wealth of the Indies shall not tempt me again to quit you! * * I come home somewhat earlier than my regiment, being a little—mind, love! *only* a little of an invalid. Don't be alarmed, my sweet Emma, for I assure you, upon my honour, that I am quite recovered. The fact is, that I received, in the battle of A——, an ugly wound in my left arm from a musket-ball, which confined me to a tent and to my bed for nearly six weeks; and Lord ——, in the kindest way, wrote to me to insist upon my returning to England for a year, in order to recruit. I came overland, and am rather fatigued with my journey. An important matter keeps me at Malta for a week; but in the very next ship I start for merry old England! * * And how have you been, my dearest Emma? And how are Arthur and George? Why do you say so little about them? and about yourself? But I suppose you have got the common notion—that your letters are opened by others than those they are directed to!—How I have guessed what might be the features and expression of my little boys! I have never seen George!—is he really like me?—By the way, I have brought you some beautiful diamonds! I have almost beggared myself (till I arrive in England) to obtain them for my Emma. How I shall delight to see them upon you!

"Unless something extraordinary should happen, you will see me in about a week after you get this letter—it *may* be only a day or two after; and, my own Emma, I most particularly wish that you will be alone during the week immediately following your receipt of this letter—for I must have you all to myself, when we meet—as the Scripture has it, 'with our joy a stranger intermeddleth not.' God bless you, my dearest, dearest

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Emma! and kiss the dear boys heartily for me! Your fond—doating husband,

"ARTHUR ST HELEN."

I returned this letter to Mrs Ogilvie in silence, who, with a heavy sigh, replaced it in her bosom.

"She must have read it," said I, after a pause.

"Yes," she replied with a shudder of disgust and horror, "and if she felt herself guilty, I wonder she survived it!" * * *

"What arrangements have you made with respect to the children?" I inquired.

She replied, "that she had already given directions for their removal to her house, where she should keep them till her brother's return;" trembling as she uttered the last word or two. * * *

"I suppose you haye heard some of the many painful rumours as to the conduct of Mrs St Helen latterly?" said I, in a low tone.

"Yes—oh yes—infamous woman! But the general and I have been travelling on the Continent during the last six months, or he would have taken these poor children away from her contaminating presence, even by force, if necessary. I did frequently expostulate with her in the most urgent manner, but latterly she grew very haughty, and replied to me with great rudeness, even"——

"Alas! I fear her heart has been long corrupted." She shook her head and sobbed.—I mentioned the slip of paper I had picked up in my carriage.

"Oh, many, many worse things than that have come to our knowledge since we returned from the Continent! Her disgraceful conduct drove Miss Churchill from —— Street several months ago. Oh, the scenes even she has been compelled to witness! Is there *no* punishment for this vile—this abominable Alverley!"

"Can it be true, Mrs Ogilvie, that the villain has even had the miserable meanness to borrow considerable sums of money from Mrs St Helen?"

"That also I have heard; that she has wasted the property of my poor betrayed brother, and their children, in order to supply his necessities at the gaming-table; but I cannot go on! I shall go distracted!"

I ascertained that very late in the preceding night, or rather at an early hour of the morning, Mrs St Helen had returned from Vauxhall, accompanied as usual by Captain Alverley, and immediately upon her entering the house, the above letter from Colonel St Helen was placed in her hands. Her guilty soul was thunderstruck at the sight of her husband's handwriting. Captain Alverley, who entered with her, opened and read the letter; and would have taken it away with him to destroy it, had she not insisted so vehemently upon reading it that he was forced to comply. She swooned before she had read half of the letter. All I could learn of what happened subsequently was, that Captain Alverley left about three o'clock, and returned in little more than an hour's time; that a travelling carriage-and-four drew up at the door about five o'clock; but such was her agitation and illness, that it was not till nearly half-past seven o'clock that Captain Alverley succeeded, after a vain attempt to induce her maid to accompany them, in carrying Mrs St Helen into the carriage, almost in a state of insensibility. He gave the sullen incredulous servants to understand that their mistress had been summoned off to meet Colonel St Helen! She had not ventured into the room where her children were asleep, in blessed unconsciousness of the fearful scenes that were going forward.

In most of the Monday morning's newspapers appeared the ordinary kind of paragraph announcing the "Elopement in fashionable life"—some of them mentioning the names of the parties by initials. One of them alluded to Mrs St Helen's connection with the family of the Earl of Hetheringham, whom, it stated, the "afflicting event had thrown into the deepest distress," &c.—an intimation so in-

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tolerably offensive to the pure, fastidious feelings of the countess, that the day after there appeared the following paragraph. I give verbatim the heartless disclaimer, the tone and style of which may perhaps serve to indicate the distinguished quarter whence it emanated.

"We have been requested, on the very highest authority, to take the earliest possible opportunity of correcting an unintentional and most injurious misstatement that appeared in our yesterday's paper, concerning the truly unfortunate and most distressing affair in —— Street, and one that is calculated to wound the feelings of a family of very high distinction. It is not true, but quite contrary to the fact, that the lady, Mrs *******, was educated in the family of the Earl of Hetheringham. She is certainly a remote connection of the earl's, and when extremely young, was received on a visit into his lordship's house till some family arrangements had been completed; but we have been given to understand that the lady in question and the noble family alluded to, have been long alienated, particularly the female branches." In another part of the same paper appeared the intelligence, that "Mrs St —— was a lady of great personal beauty and accomplishments, and had left a family of six children." Another newspaper informed its readers, that "the gallant companion of a certain lovely fugitive was the heir-presumptive of a peerage and a splendid fortune." A third, "that the late elopement was likely to afford lucrative employment to the gentlemen of the long robe." A fourth, "that the husband of a lady, whose recent, &c., was an officer of distinction, had long discarded her, owing to her light conduct, and was now taking steps to procure a divorce," &c. &c. &c. With such matters was—and generally is—titillated the prurient curiosity of fashionable society for a moment only—probably, after a brief interval, its attention being again excited by intimations, that "the lady whose elopement lately occasioned much stir in the fashionable circles," had destroyed herself, or betaken herself to most reckless and dishonourable courses, &c.; and that Captain A—— "was, they understood, about to lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Miss ——," &c. &c. This, I say, is not an unfrequent case; but not such was the course of events consequent upon the enormous wickedness of Mrs St Helen.

During Monday the deserted little St Helens were removed, accompanied by Miss Churchill, to the residence of Mrs Ogilvie, the general continuing in —— Street, to receive Colonel St Helen when he should arrive, and—in what way he best might—break to him the disastrous intelligence of his wife's infidelity and flight. As it was uncertain when and from what quarter Colonel St Helen would reach the metropolis, it was of course impossible to anticipate or prevent his arrival at —— Street, even had such a measure been desirable. Up to Thursday he had not made his dreaded appearance. On the evening of that day, however, a post-chaise and four, covered with dust, rattled rapidly round the corner of —— Square, and in a few moments the reeking horses stood panting at the door of Colonel St Helen's. Before either of the postillions could dismount, or the servant open the hall-door, or General Ogilvie, who was sitting in the dining-room, make his appearance, the chaise-door was opened from within, the steps thrust down, and forth sprung a gentleman in dusty travelling costume—his left arm in a sling—and rushed up to the door of the house. While his impatient hand was thundering with the knocker, the door was opened.

"Is Mrs St Helen"—he commenced, in eager and joyful accents, which, however, suddenly ceased at sight of the servant standing, pale as death, trembling and silent.

"Why—what's the matter?" stammered Colonel St Helen—for he, of course, it was. "Ah, Ogilvie!" rushing towards the general, who, having paused for an instant before presenting himself, now quitted the dining-

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room, and hurried up to the startled colonel.

"My dear St Helen!" commenced the general, his agitation apparent. A mighty sigh burst from the swelling bosom of Colonel St Helen, as he suffered himself to be drawn into the dining-room.

"What's all this!" he inquired in a hoarse, hard whisper, as General Ogilvie shut the door. He was for a moment tongue-tied at sight of the long-dreaded apparition which now so suddenly stood before him. The colonel's face became overspread with a deadly hue as he made the inquiry, and his right hand still locked that of General Ogilvie in its rigid grasp.

"St Helen, you must bear it like a man and a soldier," at length commenced the general, recovering himself. "The chances of war, you know"——

"Is she dead?" gasped the colonel, without moving from where he stood, or relaxing his hold of General Ogilvie's hand.

"No," replied the general, turning as pale as his companion.

"Then—what—in the name of God! —tell me"—— whispered Colonel St Helen, his eyes almost starting out of their sockets, while the drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead. At a word spoken in a low tone by General Ogilvie, the colonel started as if he had been stabbed, and then lay extended upon the floor. The general sprung to the bell, and shouted violently for assistance. The room was instantly almost filled with servants. One of them was despatched for me, and another for the nearest surgeon. The latter arrived in a very few minutes, and I was in attendance within little less than a quarter of an hour; for the man, knowing my carriage, stopped it as I was entering the street in which I lived. I found Colonel St Helen propped up in bed in the arms of General Ogilvie—his coat and waistcoat, and neck-handkerchief only had been removed, and his shirt-collar thrown open. The heavy snorting sound that met my ears prepared me for the worst. Colonel St Helen was in a fit of apoplexy. Within a minute or two after my entrance the jugular vein was opened—that in the arm had given no relief. Oh, that his infamous wife could have been by my side as I gazed upon the lamentable object before me! Here, woman—behold your handiwork!

He had been ever foremost in fight; he had braved death in a thousand forms; the flag of victory had often waved gloriously over him; he had quitted the field with honourable wounds; his grateful country welcomed her gallant disabled son; his affectionate wife, he thought, stretched forth her eager arms to receive him; after months of agony, on the wings of love he had flown seven thousand long miles to be—blasted, as here he lay before me!

Sad sights have I seen in my time, but when one so sad as this? My swelling heart overpowers me! Poor colonel, what can *my* art do for thee?

And thou, Alverley, come hither *thou* for a moment, slayer of the peace and honour of thy brave brother soldier! Quit for a moment the cockatrice, thy companion, to look upon this victim of your united treachery! Oh, out upon thee! thy presence corrupts the air! *Down, down to hell!* But no!—I rave—society will presently welcome you again, gay Alverley, to her harlot bosom!

Though a large opening had been made in the jugular vein, through which the blood was flowing copiously, no impression whatever seemed made, or likely to be made, upon the violence of the attack. I therefore recommended opening the turgid temporal artery—which was done—and large blisters to be applied to the nape of the neck and to the extremities—the usual means resorted to in violent apoplectic seizures. I waited for upwards of an hour, and was then obliged to leave my unhappy, but perhaps happily unconscious patient, in apparently the same state as that in which I had found him. I paid him another visit early in the morning—still he lay in extreme danger, having been bled twice during the night, but without any sensible effect.

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I willingly acceded to the general's desire for an immediate consultation with Sir ——, which accordingly took place about two o'clock. The result was, that we expressed a strong opinion that, unless a decided change took place within an hour or two, the attack would prove fatal. Why should I wish it — I thought — otherwise? What hopeless anguish would be spared him were he never to awake to a consciousness of the tremendous calamity that had befallen him! What could life henceforth be to *him*? How could his grievous wounds be healed, or even stanched? How could his wrongs be repaired, mitigated, or concealed? What bitter agony would the sight of his children ever force into his heart! I thought of all this, and for a moment did not feel anxious that success should attend our strenuous efforts to save him. They succeeded, however, and in three or four days' time it seemed probable that the unhappy sufferer would live to become acquainted with the full extent of his misery—to drain perhaps the cup of sorrow to the dregs. I was in the room when his eyes gave almost their first look of returning consciousness. Oh, dreadful contrast to the gay and happy man I last saw him before his departure for India! His hair was now somewhat of an iron-grey hue—his complexion had become deeply bronzed by his constant exposure to the rays of an Indian sun. Despite, however, his present extreme exhaustion, and the sunken sallowness of his countenance, it was impossible not to perceive its superior air—the lineaments of that bold and resolute character for which Colonel St Helen had ever been distinguished. But where was the wonted fire of those dark eyes, that were now directed towards me drowsily and unconsciously? Was he then aware of the cause of his illness, or was the frightful truth breaking bitterly and slowly upon his reviving faculties? God grant that the latter might prove to be the case, or the consequences might be disastrous indeed!

For nearly a fortnight he lay in a kind of lethargy, never once speaking, or apparently taking any notice of what was passing about him. Innumerable calls were made at his house, and inquiries concerning his health by a large circle of attached and sympathising friends. His royal highness, the commander-in-chief, sent almost daily to know how he was going on. As soon as I thought it advisable, I intimated my anxious wish that he should have the advantage of a change of scene; and as soon as he was able to be removed, travel by easy stages to Cheltenham. He simply shook his head, sorrowfully, at the same time raising his hand as if deprecating the mention of it. Of course I desisted. The next time I called, his female attendant met me on the stairs, and gave me to understand that he had begged the proposal might not be renewed, as he was determined not to quit —— Street. Before leaving him that day, General Ogilvie followed me, and told me that the colonel, who had not once made any allusion to what had taken place, suddenly inquired, in the course of the morning, in a faint tone, where his children were; and, on being informed, expressed a wish to see them. After some hesitation, I consented to their being brought the next day, for a few minutes only—the general having assured me that I could not overrate the fortitude of his suffering relative. "Depend upon it he will bear the sight of them," said the general, "better than you imagine, though certainly his nerves must have been much shaken. How shall we arrange it? I should very much wish you to be present, doctor, if you could contrive it." I promised not only to be present, but that, as I could easily arrange it, I would myself call and bring Mrs Ogilvie and the children; and so it was decided. The next afternoon, therefore, about three o'clock, on my return from visiting a patient in the neighbourhood of General Ogilvie's residence, I called there, but found Mrs Ogilvie on the point of going out, not having received any intimation of our arrangement. She in-



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stantly, however, agreed to accompany me. "And how are your little nephews?" I inquired.

"Oh, they are very well!" she replied with a sigh; "a child's grief is not very deep or lasting; Arthur was as merry the next morning after leaving —— Street, as if nothing had happened! Now and then, however, he suddenly asks me where his mamma is, and when he shall go to see her, or when she will come here! But when he sees me sometimes turn aside my head, to hide the tears that force themselves into my eyes, the poor child thinks I am angry with him, and kisses me, throwing his arms round my neck, and saying he will never ask to see his mamma again. He soon, however, forgets his promise," added Mrs Ogilvie with emotion. "Here they are at present, as merry as they can be," she continued, opening the folding-doors, and walking into a room that looked upon a pleasant garden. "Alas, that they should ever hear of what has caused all our sorrow!"

The two little boys were romping about upon the grass-plot in high glee, running after and rolling over one another. How like the elder one was to his wretched, degraded, accursed mother! The same bright blue eye, the same beautifully formed chin and mouth!—I dreaded the effect of his standing suddenly before his father!—The younger child, George, as lively as a cricket, and as brown as a berry, bore some little general resemblance to his father.

Oh, how could your mother look upon your little faces, and listen to your prattle, and feel your tiny arms embracing her, and forget that she had borne you! That you were the fruit of her womb! That your little lips had a thousand times drawn nurture from her bosom! Forget all the myriad of delicious agonies and ecstasies of a mother! Her generous, confiding, absent husband!—How could she, knowing all this, recollecting all this, deliberately surrender herself to destruction, and prefer the blighting companionship of a fiend—an adulterer!

"Now, Arthur and George," said Mrs Ogilvie, as we approached them in the garden—"you must be good children, and go and get dressed, and I will take you both out!"——

"What! a drive in the carriage? I love the ponies!" replied Arthur eagerly.

"Yes, my love, we are going to take you to see papa."

"No, no, I shall not go there! I don't like my papa! He has taken my mamma away!"

"No, child, do not talk such nonsense; papa has done no such thing. Poor papa is very ill," replied Mrs Ogilvie tremulously, "and wishes to see his little boys."

"I don't know my papa," said the child, pouting, and sidling away from us. "He's a very, very great way off—but if you'll let *mamma* go with us, then I don't care."

"Your papa," said I, observing Mrs Ogilvie's emotion, "does not know where your mamma is!" The child seemed quite puzzled at all this. "Will you go with us, then?" he inquired, turning to Mrs Ogilvie.

"Yes, love."

"Isn't my papa a very great officer?" he inquired abruptly. "He has killed—oh, such a number of people, I am told! Do you think he will like to see *us*?"

"Yes, indeed, Arthur—and he will love you very dearly!" replied Mrs Ogilvie with a faltering voice, leading her little nephews into the house. They were not long in being dressed, and we were presently on our way to town. I began to feel rather more apprehensive of the propriety of allowing the interview when I saw how his mother was running in Arthur's head. Suppose he were bluntly to ask his father what had become of her? I whispered my apprehensions to Mrs Ogilvie, and found them shared by her. She had not seen her brother since his return from India, and declared herself perfectly incapable of bearing an interview with him at present, even were he able to receive her. As we turned into —— Street, the children became very restless; and when we reached the house

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Arthur looked up at it apprehensively, and refused at first to quit the carriage. We succeeded, however, in inducing him to do so, and in pacifying him, and both the children were conducted into the library, where Mrs Ogilvie undertook to occupy their attention while I repaired to the colonel's bedside to ascertain how he was. I found him very little changed from what I had seen him on the preceding day, except that there was an evident restlessness and anxiety about the eyes. Probably he was aware that his children had arrived. General Ogilvie, who rarely quitted the chamber of his suffering brother-in-law, sat in his accustomed chair beside him. I sat down in the one usually placed for me; while my finger was on his pulse, and my eye on my watch, the colonel said, in a low tone—"They are come, are they not?" I told him that they were below.

"Let them be brought up, then, if you please—but only one at a time," said he, a faint flush appearing on his cheek. General Ogilvie immediately left the room, but not without first casting an anxious glance at me.

"You are both, I can see, apprehensive on my account," he whispered; "but I am perfectly aware of my situation.—He must not be long in the room, however; for I may not be so strong as I think myself." In a few moments General Ogilvie returned, leading in his little companion, who entered with evident reluctance, looking with some fear towards the bed where his father lay.

"You are a very good child, Arthur," said I in a soothing tone, holding out my hand to receive him—inwardly cursing at the moment his resemblance to Mrs St Helen, and which just then appeared to me stronger than ever. "Come and ask your papa how he is!" The child came and stood between my knees. Can I ever forget the looks with which that father and son, on this their bitter meeting, regarded one another? Neither spoke. It would be in vain to attempt describing that of the former: as for little Arthur, his face showed a mingled expression of apprehension and wonder. "Speak to your papa," I whispered, observing him slowly pressing back—"he is very poorly!" He looked at me for a moment, and then faintly exclaimed, gazing at Colonel St Helen—"Papa, I love you!" The poor colonel turned his head away and closed his eyes. In vain he strove to compress his quivering lip; nature *would* conquer, and the tears soon forced themselves through his closed eyelids. I wish Mrs St Helen could have seen the unutterable anguish visible in his features when he turned again to look upon the little innocent countenance—in form and feature so much resembling *hers!* After gazing thus for some moments in silence upon the child, he whispered, "Kiss me, Arthur!" He did so—bending forward, however, timorously.

"Do you love me?" inquired his father.

"Yes, papa!" The colonel stretched out his arms to embrace his son, but his left arm instantly fell again powerless beside him. He shook his head, and endeavoured to suppress a heavy sigh.

"Do you recollect me, Arthur?" he inquired. The child looked at me, and made no answer.

"Do you love your little brother George?" asked the colonel languidly.

"Yes, very much—I'll go and fetch him, papa—he will love you too—he is down stairs." Every fibre of Colonel St Helen's face quivered with emotion. His eyes overflowed with tears, and he whispered—

"I feel I cannot bear it! he had better go."

"General," said I, "will you take him down stairs? We fatigue Colonel St Helen!" But he made me no answer. He was looking forcedly away, and his tears fell fast. I therefore rose, and after lifting up the child again to kiss his suffering parent, led him down stairs, thankful that he had not tortured his father by any allusion to his infamous mother. On my return, I found Colonel St Helen much exhausted, and evidently suffering

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acutely from the distracted feelings excited by his son's presence.

He recovered, but very slowly, during the ensuing month, from as severe an attack of apoplexy as I had ever witnessed. The grief that was preying upon his heart soon showed itself in the settled gloom with which his emaciated features were laden, and which, coupled with his dangerous illness, and the very violent remedies we were compelled to adopt in order to subdue it, had reduced him almost to a skeleton. He had, indeed, fallen away most surprisingly. A fine muscular man when in health, he looked now as if he had returned from India in a deep decline. He would sit alone, and speechless, for hours; and took even his ordinary nourishment with visible reluctance. When his children entered into his presence—they were brought to him daily—he received them with affection, but his manner oppressed them. Alas! he had now no smiles with which to welcome and return any of their little overtures towards cheerfulness; in the midst of any faint attempt at merriment on their part, he would rise, and suddenly clasp them to his widowed heart in silent agony.

The manner in which, at a former period of his illness, he had rejected the proposal made to him of a change of scene, prevented its being renewed. One morning, however, he suddenly asked General Ogilvie if he could give him a home for a few months; and on being assured of the affectionate welcome with which he would be received, he expressed a desire to quit —— Street on the ensuing morning. He forthwith gave directions for his house, with all its furniture, of every description, to be sold; and the clothes, trinkets, and such personal ornaments of Mrs St Helen as were in the house, he ordered to be destroyed. He exacted a pledge to this effect from General Ogilvie. On its being given, and the necessary arrangements made for his departure, he took his arm, and—shadow of his former self!—stepped languidly into the general's carriage, drew down the blinds, and quitted —— Street for ever. The day after, in passing the house, I saw, on great staring bills in the windows and on a board upon the walls, "THIS HOUSE TO BE SOLD." To this day I never glance at such objects without being suddenly and painfully reminded of the events which are detailed in this chapter.

I could gain no intelligence whatever of the destination or movements of Mrs St Helen; it was generally supposed that she had gone, and still remained abroad, in company with Captain Alverley. I expected in each day's paper to hear of her having committed suicide; and for that reason, never omitted to cast my eye over a paragraph headed with "Coroner's Inquest," or "Distressing Suicide." Not so, however; she was reserved for severer sufferings; a more signal punishment; a more lamentable END! Captain Alverley made his appearance in London about six weeks after the elopement; and in passing along St James's Park he chanced to come upon his royal highness the commander-in-chief, who was returning on horseback from the Horse-Guards. He drew up, and motioning Captain Alverley, his *aide-de-camp*, to approach, rebuked him sternly and indignantly for the cruel and infamous outrage he had committed, commanding him never again to enter his presence. The duke rode off with a haughty scowl, leaving Captain Alverley apparently thunderstruck. This incident found its way into the next day's papers; and Captain Alverley, perceiving himself in general bad odour, threw up his commission, and withdrew, it was supposed, to the Continent. The excellent Duke of York, indeed, evinced from the first the greatest sympathy with Colonel St Helen; and as soon as he thought he might safely do so, sent him a letter, by a distinguished general officer, also a friend of the colonel's, full of the kindest and most condescending expressions, and intimating his wish to see him at the Horse-Guards at the earliest possible opportunity. He added that he was authorised to state that his majesty had

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expressed a sincere sympathy for his sufferings, and the highest approbation of his gallant conduct abroad. The colonel sighed on reading these flattering communications.

"Tell his royal highness," said he, "that I am very grateful for his condescension; and the moment I am able I will attend him personally to say as much."

"I was not exactly authorised," said Lord ——, "to mention it to you, but you are to have the —th; I heard his royal highness say as much."

"Pray tell his royal highness," replied the Colonel with a melancholy air, "that I cannot accept it, for I return to India by the next ship!"

"Good God! Colonel St Helen—return to India?" echoed Lord —— with an air of infinite astonishment.

"*Can I remain in England?*" suddenly inquired the Colonel, with a look that silenced Lord ——, at the same time hastily rising and standing for a few moments with his back turned towards him, evidently overpowered with his feelings. Neither spoke for a few moments.

"I cannot tell this to his royal highness," said Lord ——; "I know he will ask me about everything that has passed at our interview."

"Then tell him, my lord, my last words to you were, that my heart is broken, but my will is not. I shall go to India, if I live, and that as soon as possible!"

Lord —— saw that he was inflexible, and abstained from further importunities.

Three months had now elapsed from the day on which Colonel St Helen arrived in England to encounter so fell a blight of his fondest hopes, his brightest prospects; and he had made his final and gloomy preparations for returning to India. Notwithstanding the sympathising and affectionate attachment of General and Mrs Ogilvie, had it not been for the daily sight of his children—those innocent, helpless, deserted beings, whom he was himself even about to desert—he would have lost almost all sympathy with mankind. His heart yearned indeed towards his little sons—but his resolution had been taken, and was unchangeable, to return to India, and, amidst the scenes of direful carnage he had there quitted, to seek, in an honourable death, release from the agonies he suffered. He arranged all his affairs evidently on the basis of his being about to take leave of England for ever. His purposes with reference to his children might have been varied but for the fond and zealous guardians for them he found in General and Mrs Ogilvie. It was not till within a very short period of his departure, that he could bear to ask from the former a detailed account of all that had happened. He heard the name of Alverley mentioned in silence. He merely inquired for a while where he was supposed to be, and never again alluded to him. The name of Mrs St Helen never escaped his lips.

When he presented himself before the commander-in-chief, he met with a most gracious reception. His royal highness shook him warmly by the hand, and with a quivering lip assured him of his sympathy and personal regard.

"Is your resolution to return to India, Colonel St Helen, unalterable?" inquired the duke. The colonel bowed; his air and manner satisfied the duke of the uselessness of expostulation. No: in vain were the intimations of royalty, the entreaties of friends; in vain the passionate tears and embraces of his sister; in vain the energetic remonstrances of General Ogilvie; in vain were his children flung by his sister into his arms and upon his knees, in an ecstasy of grief. His darkening countenance told how vain were all such appeals. His passage was engaged in a ship quitting the Thames in a few days' time. His servant had already packed up almost all that was to be taken aboard. The dreaded morning arrived; he tenderly embraced his sister and his children before setting off for town—finally as he had determined, but only for a few hours as they supposed, understanding that he would return in the afternoon to bid them adieu for ever.

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"While he and General Ogilvie were waiting in a back room at Messrs ——, the army agents, where he wished to make some final pecuniary arrangements, his eye happened to fall upon a paragraph, which he read with almost a suspension of his breath, and a face suddenly flushed with excitement.

"Ogilvie!" said he, turning to his astonished brother-in-law a countenance that had quickly become white as death, and speaking in a totally different voice from any that had been heard from him since his illness, "I have changed my mind. I shall not go to India. At all events, not at present."

"I am delighted to hear it," said the general, evidently, however, confounded with the suddenness of the information as much as at the manner in which it was conveyed: "but, good God, what has happened? what has agitated you?"

"I am not agitated," replied Colonel St Helen, with a violent effort to speak calmly, at the same time rising from his chair, and folding up the newspaper he had been reading. "Can you spare this?" said he to the clerk whom he had summoned into the room. He was answered in the affirmative. "Then you may tell Mr —— to give himself, at present, no further trouble about the business I called upon; be so good as to inform him that I have made some change in my arrangements. Shall we walk home, Ogilvie?" They quitted Messrs ——'s immediately.

"St Helen," said General Ogilvie, as they left, "I protest that I will not return home with you till you have told me frankly what has occasioned this most extraordinary change of manner and purpose"——

"My dear Ogilvie, you shall know all. Read this," said the colonel with an excited air, taking out the newspaper; and unfolding it, he pointed out the following paragraph:—

"By the death of the Right Hon. Lord Seckington, the Hon. Captain Alverley, formerly of the —— Guards, succeeds to the title and estates, which are great, as well as to the splendid accumulations of funded property said to have been made by the late Lord S., who has bequeathed everything to the present Lord Seckington. He is now abroad, but is daily expected in —— Street."

"Well!" exclaimed the general with a deep sigh, after having read the paragraph twice over in perturbed silence, returning the paper, "of course, it is easy to guess your intentions."

"Intentions!" exclaimed Colonel St Helen, with great vivacity, "this is the first time I have breathed freely since my arrival in England!"

"Do you, then, really think of meeting this man?" inquired the general gravely, after a pause.

"Meet him? *Do I intend to meet him?*—Ogilvie, you vex me!" replied Colonel St Helen briskly and bitterly, at the same time insensibly quickening his pace. He dragged his companion along in silence, at such a rapid rate that they were almost half through the Park before either—deeply engaged with his thoughts—had again spoken.

"Let me see—how shall I know when he arrives in London?" said the colonel abruptly, as if he had thought aloud.

"Oh, there cannot be much difficulty about that," replied the general, who had by this time satisfied himself of the hopelessness of attempting to dissuade Colonel St Helen from his evident purpose.—"I will do all that you can possibly desire, since"——

"Dear Ogilvie—my dear good brother," said the colonel with affectionate energy, "do not think I shall permit *you* to be at all involved in this affair. Mischief may come of it—*I intend it shall*—I cannot deprive my sister and my children of your presence, even for a moment."

"You shall not meet him unless I am at your elbow," interrupted the general with a determined air; "I can be firm, St Helen, as well as you."

"Ogilvie, Ogilvie, how perfectly useless this is! I do assure you that my mind is fixed unalterably. It cannot be; it shall not be. May I fall at

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the first fire if I permit you to be on the ground. I could not aim steadily if you were there. No—I have got my man. Darnley will"——

"I hate your *professed* duellists," interrupted the general with irrepressible agitation.

"They are made for such an affair as mine!" exclaimed Colonel St Helen, with a kind of cheerfulness that was sickening.

General Ogilvie had never seen such a remarkable change so quickly effected in any one.

"Have you thought of your poor boys?" said he, as they approached home.

"Thank God, that my sister is your wife; that you are my brother-in-law!" exclaimed Colonel St Helen, in a more subdued tone than that in which he had been hitherto speaking; "they cannot be better off!"

"This scoundrel has no such ties! You don't meet on equal terms."

"Perhaps not exactly, but—my bullet will spoil his pretty coronet too!" —He paused, and a grim smile passed over his features. "Poor devil!" he added, with a bitter air, "I would give a trifle to be present when Major Darnley first calls upon him! It will try his mettle rather, won't it?" almost laughing—but such a laugh!

"Really, St Helen, this has turned you into a devil!" exclaimed General Ogilvie.

"The best thing that the old Lord Seckington ever did," said Colonel St Helen to himself, but aloud—as if he had not heard his companion's remark, "was to die, exactly when he *did* die; the worst thing that has happened to the new Lord Seckington was, to become Lord Seckington exactly when he *did* become Lord Seckington; and the best thing for me was, that I should come to know of it just when I *did* come to know of it."

"You are certainly, my dear St Helen, the most cruelly injured man breathing," said General Ogilvie, after they had walked for some minutes in silence, "and nobody has a right to interfere with you?"

"I should think not." replied Colonel St Helen, in the same short bitter tones in which he had been all along speaking. "Ogilvie!" he added, turning suddenly, and looking him full in the face, "no treachery! By your honour as a soldier and a gentleman, no interference in any way!"

"I should have thought that such an appeal was perfectly unnecessary," replied the general coldly.

"Oh, forgive me! forgive me, Ogilvie! Remember my sufferings; I was wrong, I know it."

"I have nothing to forgive, St Helen," replied General Ogilvie with a quivering lip. "By my God, I will be true to you in everything."

"And I will be true to myself, Ogilvie.—You shall see!" rejoined the colonel, grasping his hand, and shaking it cordially.—"And now, what must we say to my sister to prevent suspicion?"

"Oh! we must say that your ship does not sail for a fortnight, or something of that kind—it will be no difficult thing to deceive *her*, poor thing!" said the general, with a deep sigh.

"Hardy," said Colonel St Helen, addressing his groom, whom he had sent for as soon as he reached his own room at General Ogilvie's, and putting two guineas into his hand, "go directly and station yourself at the corner of —— Street, and watch Number ——, which is Lord Seckington's. Say not a word to anybody, but be on the look-out night and day; and the moment that you see a travelling carriage—or anything of the sort —go up to the door, presently inquire who it is that has come; and if you hear that it is Lord Seckington, come off to me at the top of your speed—it shall be the best half-hour's work you ever did in your life—ask quietly—quietly, mind, to see me, and tell me your news. To nobody but *me*, sir."

Hardy was a keen and faithful fellow; and in about an hour's time he was to be seen lurking about —— Street, in exact obedience to his master's orders.

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What I subsequently learned from several quarters I may state here, in

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order to keep up the course of the narrative, and the better to explain the events which remain to be detailed.

I was right in supposing that Captain Alverley and Mrs St Helen went direct to the Continent; but of their movements when there I scarce know anything. Her wild and frantic agonies of remorse at the step she had taken were scarcely calculated to increase the attachment of her heartless companion, whose satiated eye beheld the beauty which had so long fevered his soul daily disappearing. Even had it been otherwise—had she retained all the fascination and loveliness of her manners, the novelty of the affair had wore off; he had gained his object—and she perceived his altering feelings. To her guilty affrighted soul, indeed—

> The hollow tongue of time—
> —— was a perpetual knell. Each stroke
> Peal'd for a hope the less; the funeral note
> Of love deep buried without resurrection,
> In the grave of possession.

When he discovered the incurable nature of her mental sufferings—that whirling her about from one scene of amusement to another failed of its object—he began to complain that his funds were running low. He had, in truth, long been greatly embarrassed and involved—yet had he contrived to appear possessed of all the wealth and to enjoy all the luxuries and elegancies that penniless young men of fashion so mysteriously secure for themselves. Now, however, the money he had obtained from Mrs St Helen, as well as a few hundreds that had been supplied to him by a brother reprobate in order to carry on the intrigue, had almost disappeared. He began to feel himself placed in very awkward circumstances. What is a penniless man of fashion in Paris? Captain Alverley, besides, was burdened with the perpetual presence of a woman who was weeping bitterly from morning to night—frequently in very violent hysterics—and who vehemently reproached him with being the author of all her misery. He soon began to sicken of all this. Was it for this that he had quitted all the pleasures of London, and lost all his hopes of advancement in the army? Paris was a very pleasant place, and he could have enjoyed himself there but for this unfortunate and—as he soon felt and expressed it—most disgusting affair. He therefore began to loathe the very sight of his miserable companion. It was unquestionably with a feeling of keen regret that he found her brought home one night dripping from the Seine, after an abortive attempt at self-destruction, to which his cold sarcastic repartees had impelled his half-maddened victim. The poor captain was to be pitied—his bold and dashing adventure had turned out most unfortunately! Instead of the brilliant beauty he had reckoned on having secured for at least a year or two in Mrs St Helen, he beheld it suddenly withered and gone, and there was ever with him a haggard woman, tearing her hair, wringing her hands, and frantically taxing him with being her destroyer. In vain he sought to escape from it—she would never leave him! He had returned to London to endeavour to raise funds; his unlucky encounter with the commander-in-chief sent him back in fury to Paris. He had never felt himself in such an extremity; and he determined, after much bitter reflection, that could he but once get extricated from this unfortunate adventure, he would never again undertake one on so extensive a scale.

Of a sudden, however, an express from London brought him news that electrified him with delight—a delight which, in the enthusiasm of the moment, he attempted to communicate to his gloomy companion. By the death of his aged uncle he had become Lord Seckington; the proprietor of Seckington Castle, in ——shire; one or two other houses in different parts of the country; and a splendid mansion in —— Street; with a rent-roll of upwards of £25,000 a-year, and not less than £200,000 in the Funds. At the first impulse of his generous feelings he determined to settle upon Mrs St Helen the sum of £500 a-year, which he permitted her to spend wherever she chose—offering to give her a thousand pounds in addition if she would not re-

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turn to England. She began, however, now to be unreasonable; and affected to receive his liberal proposal with consternation.

And was it really then possible that, after all he had said and done, she was not to become Lady Seckington! Even if Colonel St Helen should take successful proceedings for a divorce? Horror—horror unutterable!

* * * *

The next communications that reached Lord Seckington consisted chiefly of pressing entreaties from his solicitor, and that of his lamented uncle, the late Lord Seckington, that he would lose no time in coming to London, as there were many matters requiring his immediate attention. He was glad to see their letters accompanied with one that bore the handwriting of his intimate friend, Captain Leicester. He opened it, and read thus—

"Dear Seckington—

"Pshaw, how odd it looks! Of course I congratulate you, as everybody does. Don't cut your old friends, that's all. But I write chiefly to say—wait abroad a little, only till the excitement of the thing has a little gone down. That unhappy devil St H—— is in town; but I hear he's going back to India in double-quick time. *Would it not be as well to wait till he's off, and the coast is clear?* Eternally yours,

"F. Leicester.

"The Right Hon. Lord Seckington."

On perusing this well-timed and friendly letter, it suddenly occurred to Lord Seckington that he had certainly various matters of importance to settle in different parts of the Continent; and so he wrote to his solicitors—infinitely to their astonishment and vexation. He was preparing to set off for Brussels two or three days afterwards, when another letter reached him from the same friendly and vigilant pen.

(*Private.*)

"London, 8th August 18—.

"Dear Seckington,

"What the deuce is in the wind? perhaps you can better guess than I can tell; but I lose no time in writing, to say that Colonel St Helen, who had appointed to sail to India (as I told you in my letter of the other day), and taken leave of everybody in a gloomy way, to seek an honourable grave, &c. &c. &c., has suddenly changed his mind, countermanded all his arrangements, and stops in London!! Every one is amazed at this queer move. I have reason to know that he had actually engaged his passage by a ship that started two or three days ago, and has forfeited all the passage-money. This certainly looks cursedly unpleasant—are we to look out for a squall? Do you think he has seen that offensive, impertinent paragraph about you in the papers, and *is waiting for you?* If so, I fear you are in a very awkward predicament, and I really scarce know how to advise you. It will hardly do to keep out of the way a little longer, will it? Ask ——, and ——, and above all, Count ——. Ever yours, more and more,

"F. L."

As Lord Seckington read this letter his face gradually became as white as the paper he looked upon. Several letters lay on the table before him unopened and unattended to With Captain Leicester's in his hand, he remained motionless for nearly half an hour; at the expiration of which period he was on the point of going into his bedroom and putting the muzzle of a pistol into his ear. Probably what he endured in that brief interval counterbalanced all the pleasure of his whole life. Lord Seckington was a hopeless reprobate, but he was no coward; on the contrary, he was as cool and brave a man as ever wore epaulets. But consider his situation.

Here he was, scarce two-and-thirty years old, suddenly become a peer of the realm, having succeeded to a very ancient title; and with all appliances and means to boot—all that could secure him

Honour, wealth, obedience—troops of friends—

in short, occupying as brilliant a posi-

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tion as man could well be placed in: yet amidst all the dazzling prospect that was opened before him, his eye lit and settled upon one fell figure only —that of COLONEL ST HELEN, standing at ten or twelve paces distance from him, his outstretched arm steadily pointing a pistol at his head, with deadly purpose and aim unerring. It was perfectly frightful.

What would he have cared for it in the heyday of his career as Captain Alverley; or rather as he was only a few short days before—desperately in debt, driven from the army, disgusted with the presence and stunned with the shrieks of a woman he had long loathed; but NOW — Perdition! The cold sweat stood upon his brow, and he felt sick to death. *What was to be done?* He could not keep out of the way—the spirit of a man could not endure the idea of such cowardice: no, his coronet should, at all events, never be defiled by the head of a *coward*. So there was no alternative. To London he must go, and that without delay, with the all but certainty that, within a few hours of his arrival, Colonel St Helen would have avenged all the wrongs he had suffered by sending a bullet through the head of him who had inflicted them. These were the dreadful thoughts that were passing through his mind, when the spectre stood suddenly before him, Mrs St Helen, who then happened to enter his room—all her beauty gone, a truly lamentable object.

"Well, madam," commenced Lord Seckington, bitterly and fiercely, "I am going to London, to be shot at by your d——d husband. He will certainly kill me; that is, if I do not first"—— The latter part of this fiendish speech was lost upon Mrs St Helen, who had fallen down in a swoon. He immediately summoned assistance into the room, and then quitted it, hastily gathering up his letters; but, by some fatality, leaving behind him the one which had occasioned him his horrible agonies—Captain Leicester's. It fell into the hands of Mrs St Helen's maid, who communicated its direful contents to Mrs St Helen, but not till after Lord Seckington had quitted Paris. He hurried to his bedroom, and after drinking off a large glass of Cognac, he dressed, and set off to consult with one or two "experienced" friends upon the chief matter that now absorbed his attention—whether the laws of duelling would admit, under the circumstances of his expected meeting with Colonel St Helen, of his shooting at his antagonist in the first instance; which would afford him, he considered, the only chance he had of saving a life he was just then particularly anxious to preserve.

"You must give him," said Colonel ——, a considerable authority in such matters, "two shots in my opinion, and even a third, if the first two have had no effect; and then you may do as you will."

"Poh!" exclaimed Lord Seckington, with undisguised trepidation.

"Well," replied the colonel quietly, "you may say *poh!* if you like; but you asked my opinion, and you have it. I have known it acted upon several times, and never objected to."

"Is your friend a good shot?" inquired Count ——, a little fire-eater as ever breathed.

"I should say, in all probability, as good as myself."

The count shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, that is very bad!—I think you may shoot at your friend at the very first, *by accident*."

"That's not exactly the way matters are settled in England, count," interrupted Colonel —— sharply; the vivacious Frenchman retorted; one word led on another, and that evening they went through a little duel-scene of their own; Lord Seckington being actually compelled to stand second to his countryman. On returning to his hotel, he found the cards of almost every one of his most distinguished countrymen then resident in Paris lying on his table. He turned sick at heart as he looked upon them. He found that Mrs St Helen was still in a state of insensibility, and he embraced the opportunity it afforded him of preparing for his immediate de-

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parture; but not before he had left sufficient funds to provide for her comforts till he could send her further assistance from London, if, indeed, she did not first receive the intelligence of his death. Early in the ensuing morning he set out with much the same thoughts and feelings as those with which a man might pass through beautiful scenery on his way to the guillotine.

Perhaps it might not be exaggeration to say that he endured the tortures of the damned; and when his post-chaise and four drew up opposite the frowning portals of his house in —— Street, he stepped out of it pale as death, and scarce able to conceal his agitation from the obsequious menials who lined the hall to receive their new lord. "How long will they be *mine!*" thought he, and sickened as he thought.

As soon as the bustle of his arrival was over, and while the emptied chaise was being led away from the door, a groom, who might have been observed loitering about the further end of the street, stepped up, gently pulled the area bell, and inquired if that was Lord Seckington who had arrived. He was rather tartly answered in the affirmative by a bustling servant. The groom sauntered carelessly down the street; but as soon as he had turned the corner, he ran as if a pack of beagles had been at his heels, and scarce ever stopped till he had reached General Ogilvie's. He succeeded in communicating his pregnant intelligence to Colonel St Helen without having excited the suspicion of any one in the house; which Colonel St Helen quitted a few minutes afterwards.

About seven o'clock the same evening a gentleman knocked at the door of Lord Seckington's house. Having been informed that his lordship was very particularly engaged, the stranger gave his card, and desired to be shown into the library, where he would wait his lordship's leisure, as he had a very pressing engagement with him. The servant accordingly ushered him into the library, and took up to Lord Seckington the card of "Major Darnley." He had not long to wait; for in less than five minutes the door was opened, and Lord Seckington entered in his dressing-gown.

"Major Darnley, I presume?" he inquired, politely advancing towards his visitor, who rose and bowed. Lord Seckington, who looked pale and fatigued with travelling, apologised for his delay in attending the major, and also for his dress, on the score of his having not yet had time to change it.

"I need only mention the name of Colonel St Helen, my lord," said Major Darnley in a low tone, "to apprise your lordship of the very painful nature of my errand."

"Certainly—I perfectly understand," replied Lord Seckington, rather hastily.

"Of course, my lord, the sooner this affair is settled the better"——

"By all means," replied Lord Seckington calmly. "I have no doubt that my friend, Captain Leicester, whom I know to be in town, will act with you immediately on my behalf. Probably he is this moment at ——'s, where you could hardly fail of meeting him," looking at his watch.

"Perhaps your lordship will favour me with a line addressed to Captain Leicester, intimating the nature of my application?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Lord Seckington; and sitting down, he wrote a few lines to the desired effect, and folding up the note, directed it, and gave it to Major Darnley.

"Probably Captain Leicester will be with your lordship shortly; shall I tell him that your lordship waits here for him?"

"I beg you will do me that favour. Pray, Major Darnley, let no time whatever be lost," added Lord Seckington with a smile which it would have been a luxury to a fiend to witness. He rang the bell, and Major Darnley took his leave. The instant that the door was closed, Lord Seckington, after a sickening glance round at the spacious and splendid apartment, threw himself upon the sofa in a state of mind that it would be in vain to attempt describing.

Having agreed to dine that evening

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with one of his old friends who had succeeded to a dukedom since they had met, and who had quitted Lord Seckington only half an hour before Major Darnley's arrival, it became necessary to write off immediately, and announce his inability to be present. He did so, and stated it to be owing to very pressing engagements, and the thought which had since occurred to him, that he ought not to dine out till after his uncle's funeral—well knowing that his own funeral might probably take place at the same time? It may be easily understood that he was in no humour to renew the business-details which Major Darnley's arrival had interrupted. He sent a message to that effect up-stairs to his solicitor, to whom he had promised to return, begging him to be in attendance in the morning; and ordering dinner to be prepared and served at a moment's notice, he again threw himself upon the sofa. He was roused from his dreadful reverie about a quarter before eight o'clock by Captain Leicester, who was in full dinner-dress, having been met by Major Darnley just as he was preparing to go to the Duke of ——'s, where he was to have been surprised by the appearance of Lord Seckington. After his hurried interview with Major Darnley, he had come off direct to —— Street.

"Well, Alverley — Seckington, I mean—you see it's just as I suspected," said he, hastily stepping up to Lord Seckington.

"Yes," replied his lordship, shaking him cordially by the hand, and unconsciously sighing. "May I reckon on your services?"

"Oh, of course! I am here on the business now."

"Where were you going when Major Darnley found you?" inquired Lord Seckington, alluding to Captain Leicester's dress.

"The Duke of ——'s."

"Ah, I was to have been there too!" said Lord Seckington. "They'll suspect that something's wrong by our both so suddenly sending refusals."

"And let them; they're not likely to send us peace-officers if they *do* suspect!—They'll only be devilish sorry to lose the company of two deuced good knives and forks—that's all!"

"I have ordered dinner here to be ready at a moment's notice," said Lord Seckington, as the servant brought in candles. He *must* have observed the troubled and pallid countenance of his lord, as he placed them upon the table near which Lord Seckington and Captain Leicester were standing. "You *can* stay to dinner?"

"I think, perhaps, I have half an hour to spare," replied Captain Leicester; for duellists, like lovers, *must* eat, it would seem;—"but I can't spare one second more, for I've engaged to meet Darnley at ——'s by a quarter to nine o'clock." Lord Seckington rang, and ordered dinner to be served immediately.

"This bloodthirsty devil, St Helen," said Lord Seckington, as the servant closed the door, "must have been watching for my arrival—Major Darnley was with me in less than an hour after I had got into the house."

"Very probably. No doubt he had hired some fellow to lurk about and bring him word of your arrival. You know, my dear fellow," added Captain Leicester, "there's no disguising the thing; we are likely to have sharp work on our hands in the morning."

"The morning? I shall go mad if I have to wait all through the night!" exclaimed Lord Seckington vehemently; "D——n me if I could not infinitely prefer fighting to-night—why could it not be at ——'s? You could easily manage it, Leicester. You really must arrange it so! I sha'n't have a chance if we wait till the morning!"

"You know it can't be done," replied Captain Leicester quietly, as soon as Lord Seckington had ceased—"it's not *selon la règle*—there's a method in everything, and duelling is nothing without it. Darnley would laugh at me if I proposed it."

"Well, I am of course in your hands. You must do as you think proper," said Lord Seckington with a sigh.

"I'll parade you—let me see—five, or six o'clock—either will do,"

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said Captain Leicester thoughtfully. "However, we shall discuss everything fully to-night at ——'s."

"Did you ever know of such an unhappy devil as I am, Leicester?" exclaimed Lord Seckington abruptly, walking to and fro—"*just now* to be shot!"

"Ay, and for such a cause, that's the ugly part of the story—but what does that signify? 'Twas an adventure carried on with the utmost spirit—you could not *command* success, you know—eh? isn't that the word?"

"It's d——d hard to part with all this!" exclaimed Lord Seckington sadly, pointing to the fine library. "Hell must be a joke to what *I've* suffered since I got your last letter."

"I thought it would have that effect when I was writing it. But"—shrugging his shoulders—"the thing's done now, and you must try not to think of it. 'Tis worse than useless. Make your will, and snap your fingers at everything and everybody in the world. That's the way a man of sense and spirit should meet death, and then he conquers it!—By the way, if you *were* to make your will it might be as well. There's an infernal heap of money in the Funds, you know"——

"O Leicester, don't torment me!" interrupted Lord Seckington, writhing with agony. I shall do what is proper, you may depend upon it."

"Well, my dear fellow, don't take it ill. 'Tis no more than every second should do for his principal when he expects warm work! Of course, St Helen, you know, will do his best to hit you; but, after all, there's no *certainty*, even with the deadest shot in the world."

"Oh, curse the ———!" groaned Lord Seckington, coupling Mrs St Helen's name with the vilest epithet that could be applied to a woman.

"No, no, Seckington—you forget yourself. I call that very unhandsome—nay, it's ungrateful—it's d——d bad taste!"—said Captain Leicester seriously.

"You should only know the kind of life she's led me since we went abroad!" exclaimed Lord Seckington vehemently.

"Poor devil, you ought not to speak of her in that way!" said Captain Leicester with a grave air of displeasure. "Pray remember, Seckington, that whatever she is, you have made her. It is not handsome to speak so of the woman that has denied you nothing, and lost everything for your sake. I don't like to hear you talk so—I don't, indeed!"

"Well," exclaimed Lord Seckington, after walking violently to and fro—"I suppose I *may* say that I wish I had been in —— before I had ever seen her."

"Ah, yes—quite another matter; but we mustn't have anything unkind said of poor pretty Mrs St Helen."

"Pretty! By ——, you should see her now! Pretty!"

"Well—but I hope you have settled something handsome on her?"

"Five hundred a-year"——

"Devilish liberal, certainly. Would she speak to me if we met at Paris?"

Lord Seckington made no reply, but, with his arms folded, kept walking to and fro, heaving heavy sighs.

"Take my advice, Seckington—make a brave effort, and throw it all off your mind. It *can* do you no good, it *will* do you infinite harm. Fancy yourself plain Charles Alverley—the dodged of duns—drop 'my lord,'—think nothing of your rent-roll or your funded property; they'll be all the more delightful if you escape to-morrow! Why do you provoke your fate? Hope for the best. Depend upon it, you're too good a fellow to be ordered off just in the nick of time—oh, it's impossible!"

Lord Seckington grasped his hands and looked unutterable things.

"You know, Leicester, it is not *death* that I care for, come how or when it may," said he, "I'm a little above *that*, I should hope."

"Don't fear *Bogy*, then, eh?" interrupted Captain Leicester with a smile.

"Pshaw!—But, by the way, what am I to do? How often am I to receive his fire?"

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"Ah, *I've* been considering that point a little. Why, I think—twice."

"And I"——

"Fire wide the first time, of course"——

"But I don't think it *is* quite such a matter *of course*, Leicester."

"Oh, nonsense, it's clear as daylight—trust me."

"Really its devilish hard—he'll try to take my life. It's throwing away my only chance. It's going out to be clean murdered!"

"Seckington, put yourself into my place. You know that what I say is the correct thing.—It must be so, or *I* am not responsible. If nothing happens, of course he'll demand another shot; and then, you may perhaps—hem!—I don't say what *you* ought to do, but I think I know what *I* should do.—And the same if a third is asked for."

"Why the devil does not the fellow announce dinner?" exclaimed Lord Seckington, violently pulling the bell.

"Hush! don't be so feverish. He announced it five minutes ago—I've been on the move ever since—I've now only a quarter of an hour."

Here the servant made his appearance, and Lord Seckington in silence followed his companion to the dining-room. Both of them cast one significant glance at the splendour of the sideboard display—and, indeed, of everything about them.

"The first time you have ever done the honours here, I presume?" said Captain Leicester, as he took his seat.

"It is probably the *last*," thought Lord Seckington. Alas! what would he have given at that moment to undo what he had done—to have begun nothing of which he had not well considered the end—never to have blasted the happy home of his brave brother soldier—to escape from the mortal thraldom he was now enduring! Perhaps, had he been calm enough, a lesson of his earlier days might have recurred to him before the fearful lesson of the ensuing morning!

Audire est operæ pretium, procedere rectè
Qui mœchis non vultis—ut omni parte laborent!
Utque illis multo corrupta dolore voluptas,
Atque hæc rara, cadat dura inter sæpe periclа!*

It was settled by the seconds that the meeting should take place at five o'clock on the ensuing morning, in Battersea Fields; and as both of them anticipated its turning out a desperate affair, they made all necessary arrangements to meet contingencies, providing for the instant flight of the survivor and themselves—or, it might be—of themselves alone—in the event of anything fatal occurring. Two experienced surgeons also were in attendance. Their arrangements, in short, were admirably made, for they were both of them somewhat experienced in such affairs. Within a very few moments of each other's arrival, were the two hostile parties in the field. Both Colonel St Helen and Lord Seckington were very finely made men, and of a most gentlemanlike appearance. The former was dressed in a blue surtout and light trousers—the latter in black—black from head to foot—not a spot of colour about him—nothing that might possibly serve to point the weapon of his antagonist—a precaution of his thoughtful second, of which he had readily availed himself, but which was totally disregarded by Colonel St Helen. The process of loading was soon got through—the distance, ten paces, duly stepped out by Major Darnley—each second motioned his principal to take his proper place—and then Lord Seckington stood, in fearful contiguity, in the immediate presence of his irreparably injured and mortal foe. He did not attempt either to sustain or return the dreadful look with which Colonel St Helen regarded him! Pistols having been placed in their hands—the seconds withdrew to about a dozen paces.

"Gentlemen, are you ready? Fire!" exclaimed Major Darnley.

Both pistols were discharged as he uttered the last word, and the principals remained standing unhurt. Lord Seckington fired as he had been en-

* Hor. Sat., Lib. I. Sat. ii.

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joined, while Colonel St Helen's ball whistled closely past the chin of his opponent.

"Are you satisfied?" inquired Captain Leicester.

"By no means," replied Major Darnley.

They loaded again—again withdrew, having placed fresh pistols in the hands of their respective principals—again was the word given—again both fired simultaneously, but again without effect. It was evident that this time Lord Seckington had followed the example of his opponent, for his ball passed close behind Colonel St Helen's shoulder.

"I presume you are now satisfied?" inquired Captain Leicester.

"Certainly not," replied Major Darnley. "I must insist upon a third shot."

"I really cannot permit it"——

"Load again!" exclaimed Lord Seckington in a low tone, with a sullen reckless air; and the seconds resumed their gloomy functions.

A third time their principals stood awaiting their signal, and as the word "Fire!" escaped from the lips of Major Darnley, both were observed taking deliberate aim. Well Colonel St Helen knew it was his last chance—that another shot could not be allowed; and Lord Seckington was of course aware of what was passing through his adversary's breast. Neither fired till a second or two after the word had been uttered, when their pistols flashed together, and Lord Seckington sprung upwards and instantly lay extended upon the ground. Colonel St Helen's ball appeared to have passed through the head of his opponent, while he himself, still convulsively grasping his weapon, remained standing, looking silently and grimly at his prostrate antagonist.

"Fly! For God's sake, fly!" exclaimed Major Darnley, looking towards Colonel St Helen from beside the insensible figure of Lord Seckington.

"Is he killed?" whispered Colonel St Helen, as Major Darnley rushed up to him, repeating his entreaties.

"Yes—yes—I fear he is," replied the major. "Why, St Helen! St Helen! Are *you* hit?" rushing forward. He caught the colonel in his arms, and both fell together on the ground.

The surgeon who had accompanied him to the field was instantly at his side, and pronounced Colonel St Helen to have had a fit of apoplexy. Lord Seckington's ball had all but touched the breast of Colonel St Helen, who with truer and more deadly aim had so directed his ball that it passed right through the bones of the nose, immediately beneath the eyebrows, carrying away almost the whole of the nasal bones. Lord Seckington was not dead, though perfectly insensible—the wound he had received was one that, if he survived, would occasion him the most frightful disfigurement for life. He was carried insensible to his carriage, a handkerchief having been thrown over his face, and hurried off at the top speed of his four horses to —— Street. It was found necessary to bleed Colonel St Helen on the spot from both arms, and as soon as the incisions had been hastily bandaged up, he was conveyed, with difficulty, to his carriage, and taken home to General Ogilvie's, a dismal spectacle!

A short time before the carriage containing Lord Seckington reached —— Street, a post-chaise drew up opposite to his door, in which were two females, one of whom appeared violently agitated.

"Knock and ring—ring hard!—open the chaise-door—make haste!" exclaimed one of them in a breath; and as soon as the hall door was thrown open by the alarmed porter—for all the servants had a suspicion of the dreadful nature of the engagement which had taken Lord Seckington away so early in a carriage-and-four, and were now awaiting his return in the utmost trepidation—she rushed in.

"Is Lord—Lord Seckington—is he at home?" she gasped.

"Yes—no," replied the affrighted porter in a breath. "Do you know anything about his lordship?" By this time the valet, who had accompanied

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him to France and had returned with him, made his appearance, and whispered to the porter, who then, in a somewhat less respectful tone, inquired, "Does his lordship expect you, ma'am?"

"No, my lord does not, I can answer for that," interposed the valet; "he thinks you're at this moment in Paris."

"Silence, sir! show me instantly into the dining-room," said the lady, as indignantly as her violent agitation would admit of.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said the porter, placing himself between her and the dining-room door, "I—I cannot admit you. Are you a relation of his lordship's, or what? What's your business here?"

"Hinder me at your peril, sirrah!" exclaimed Mrs St Helen—for she it was—with all her naturally commanding tone and manner; and at the same time pushing him gently aside, without further opposition she entered the dining-room.

"Order in my maid from the chaise!" said Mrs St Helen, sinking exhausted in the nearest chair, scarce able to stand, or to see whether her orders were attended to. There was a sudden muster of servants in the hall for a few moments; and after a hurried conversation together, the dining-room door was opened by the valet.

"I hope, ma'am, you won't make it necessary, ma'am, for us to do our duty. I know, ma'am, who you are," he commenced with a determined air.

"Audacious wretch!" exclaimed Mrs St Helen, roused for a moment by his extraordinary insolence, "if you don't instantly leave this room, sir,"——

"Ah, ma'am, leave the room? Pray, ma'am, are you mistress here? *I* leave the room, ma'am? You will leave it first, ma'am, I can tell you, if it comes to that—that's flat!" he continued, pushing wider open the door. "Do you think, ma'am, I'm going to be talked to in this way, by you? I know who you are, ma'am, quite well! Do you think I hadn't my eyes and my ears open at Paris? My lord's done the handsome thing by you, and you ought not to come following him about the town in this way: ah, ma'am, you may look, but I fancy my lord's done with you; he's got other fish to fry just now—believe me." At that moment a vehicle was heard approaching rapidly, and a hubbub in the hall drew the valet thither. "Drive away that chaise!" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices in the street, and Lord Seckington's carriage dashed up to the door. Mrs St Helen sprung to the window, hearing her chaise ordered away, expecting some new insult was preparing for her: and beheld the miserable figure of Lord Seckington in the act of being carried out of the carriage, his head covered over with a blood-spotted white handkerchief. She rushed from the dining-room, and, with a piercing shriek, was flying down the steps, when one of the agitated servants accidentally tripped her foot, and she fell with her forehead upon the corner of one of the steps, where she lay insensible and disregarded till Lord Seckington had been carried in, when the hall door was closed. There she *might* have continued, but for the humanity of one or two persons in the crowd that had gathered round Lord Seckington's carriage. They raised her from the ground; and having been informed from the area that she did not belong there, and that they knew nothing whatever about her, they carried her, still insensible from the stunning effects of her fall and of her violent mental agitation, to the nearest public-house, whither her attendant in the chaise followed her. From the representations and entreaties of the latter, the surly publican consented to receive Mrs St Helen for the present into his house, and a medical man was sent for.

This was the once beautiful, happy, innocent wife and mother, Emma St Helen, who had torn herself from her helpless children, her affectionate husband; who had opened her foolish and guilty ear and heart to the tempter; who had fled from the pure arms of her husband to the blasting serpent-like embraces of an adulterer; who could pity her? Here, discarded and insulted

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by the menials of her seducer, she lay dishonoured in her extremity among low and unwilling mercenaries; her beauty entirely gone; wasted to a skeleton; heart-broken; paralysed with the dreadful spectacle of her dead paramour, whose hand had perhaps, that morning too, been dyed with the blood of her husband!

It seemed that, as soon as ever she recovered her senses when at Paris, and discovered the departure of Lord Seckington, and learned from her maid the too probable object of his abrupt disappearance, she determined on following him, and engaged a passage in the very next conveyance that started, so as, by travelling night and day, to reach —— Street the very morning after Lord Seckington's arrival.

I was called in to attend Colonel St Helen about ten o'clock, and found him in almost precisely similar circumstances to those in which he had been placed when I formerly attended him, only that the present was a far more serious attack, and the probabilities of its fatal termination infinitely greater. All our efforts to relieve the labouring brain proved unavailing, and we all gave up the case in despair. On the Saturday evening after his fatal meeting with Lord Seckington, I was returning on horseback from a visit to a distant patient, residing about two miles beyond General Ogilvie's house, and determined to call in to inquire after Colonel St Helen, if he yet survived. When within a few yards of the house, I overtook two men carrying a coffin on their backs. I stopped my horse—my conjectures were right—they opened the general's gate, and went up to the house. So it was at length all over! Poor, broken-hearted St Helen, victim of the perfidy of the wife of your bosom—of the villany of your brother soldier—your sorrows were at length ended. After pausing for a few moments, I despatched my groom, desiring him to inquire whether they wished to see me. The general sent back word that he particularly desired to see me, and I dismounted. He met me at the door, and, with the utmost grief visible in his countenance and manner, told me the event that had taken place. I followed him into the room he had just quitted, and we sat down together. Colonel St Helen expired that day about twelve o'clock; only an hour after I had been with him. "He lay," said the general, "in the same state in which you left him, almost to the last, in a dull stupor. I was sitting on one side of the bed, and Mrs Ogilvie, contrary to my wishes—seeing her excessive agitation—entered the room I had a little before insisted upon her quitting, and resumed the seat she had before occupied on the bedside. The noise she made seemed to rouse him slightly from his lethargy. He slowly opened his eyes—the first time during his illness—looked dully at her; I think his lips seemed to move, and on bending my ear till it almost touched them, I think I heard the word, 'Emma!' His head sank back upon the pillow, he breathed heavily for a moment or two, and St Helen was no more! No doubt," continued the general, with great emotion, "he had a confused notion that it was Mrs St Helen who was sitting beside him—alas, that such a polluted being should have troubled his last thoughts! Yet there seemed no anger or disgust in his manner—if it had any character at all, it was one of forgiveness!"

He was buried at ——; and there was scarcely an officer of distinction in London that did not insist upon following him to the grave. The kind-hearted commander-in-chief shed tears, I understood, when he heard of his death. He bequeathed his fortune to his children equally, leaving General and Mrs Ogilvie their guardians, whom he also empowered to allow Mrs St Helen, should she ever require it, such a sum as would place her out of the reach of destitution. The will was dated only the day before that on which he fought with Lord Seckington.

I regret to have to mention that name again, and shall dismiss it briefly and for ever. I did not attend him, but heard several details concern-



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ing him from those who did. It would perhaps have been mercy had Colonel St Helen's ball passed into his brain, and deprived him of life on the spot. It had utterly destroyed the nasal bones—and it is impossible to conceive a more repulsive object than he must have presented to every beholder during the remainder of his days. He endured intolerable agony for many months, from his wound; and when at length, through the carelessness of one of his attendants, he suddenly obtained a sight of his countenance in the glass, the dreadful and irremediable disfigurement he had sustained drove him almost to madness. He gnashed his teeth, and yelled the most fearful and blasphemous imprecations; and, in short, to such a pitch of frenzy was he driven by it, that it was found necessary to place him for some time under constraint, lest he should lay violent hands upon himself. He gradually, however, became calmer, and appeared likely in time to become reconciled to his misfortune. Colonel St Helen was dead—that was *some* gratification! Lord Seckington had still vast solace left him; he was, after all, a peer of the realm; he had a fine, a noble fortune, at his command; and these, with other consolatory topics, were urged upon him so frequently and earnestly by his friends and attendants, as at length to satisfy them that they might lay aside their apprehensions, and release him from the painful—the intolerable restraint they had felt it necessary to impose upon him, also relaxing the strictness of their surveillance. They did so; and a day or two afterwards, the event was duly announced in the newspaper as follows!—"On the 29th ult., at —— Street, in his 32d year, the Right Honourable Lord Seckington." If such a thing as a *Coroner's Inquest* took place, the papers took no notice of it; and everybody was satisfied that he died in consequence of the wounds he had received in his duel with Colonel St Helen.

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My pen moves heavily and reluctantly in tracing these painful, but, I hope, nevertheless, instructive scenes; my heart aches as I recall them—but my long labours now draw to a close.

General and Mrs Ogilvie, with their little precious charges—for precious they were, and they were themselves childless—withdrew, in about a twelvemonth after Colonel St Helen's death, to a remote part of England, where they might attend exclusively and unremittingly to the important and interesting duties confided in them. Their departure, and the endless absorbing engagements of a busy professional life in the metropolis, caused the gloomy transactions above narrated gradually to disappear from my memory, which, however, they had long and grievously haunted. Three years afterwards, there occurs the following entry in my Diary!—

"Wednesday, 8th October 18—."

* * But I shall endeavour to describe the scene exactly as it appeared to me.—May experience never enable me to describe such another!

"Hush! stand here, Dr——," whispered Mr B——, the proprietor of an extensive private asylum near the metropolis, where I had called to visit a gentleman who had been long a patient of mine. "Hush, don't speak, nor be at all alarmed," opening a small, and, as it seemed to me, a secret door—"these are my *incurables!* Hark! I think I know what they are about. Step forward here. Can you see?" I did as he directed. From my position I could not see very distinctly, but the room was long and rather narrow, and had a resemblance to a ward in an hospital, with about half-a-dozen beds on each side of the room, on which were sitting as many boys, apparently from about fifteen to eighteen years old, wearing long blue dresses, and their hair cut as close to their heads as possible. They were making all manner of discordant noises, and seemed eagerly talking together, but each remained sitting quietly on his own bed; a circumstance I mentioned to Mr B——, expressing my surprise that, so eager and violent as their gestures seemed, they should not quit

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their beds. "It would be very strange if they *could*," he whispered with a smile, "for they are all fastened to a staple in the wall, by a strong girdle passing round their waists. Bless your life! if it was not for that, they would soon kill one another, and everybody that came near them. It was only last month that one of them contrived to twist herself"——

"*Herself!*" I whispered in amazement; "what do you mean, Mr B——?"

"Why, what I say, doctor, surely—are not you aware that these are women?"

"Gracious God, *women!*" I exclaimed, with a perfect shudder.

"Why, certainly! But, by the way, they don't look much like women either; that close cut hair of theirs is so like the head of a charity schoolboy!—Some of these wretched people have been, and in point of family are, highly respectable. It may appear very shocking to you to see them in this condition; it was so to me until I grew accustomed to it. I assure you we use no unnecessary violence or restraint whatever; but, on the contrary, give them every indulgence their unfortunate condition will admit of. What can we do with them? There are several of them perfect fiends if they have the slightest license. I was obliged to have this room constructed on purpose, apart from the rest of my establishment, their noises were so dreadful;—now, hark!"

"Whoo—whoo—whoo"—shrieked a voice louder than any of the rest, "who'll go to the moon? who'll go to the moon? who'll go to the moon?"

"I—I've got it!" shouted another—"Poll! Poll! what have you done with the moon?"

"I go for the stars—the stars! Whirr! whirr! whirr!—Away! away! away!" cried another.

"Ha! ha! ha!—Ha! ha! ha!" said another voice, bursting into loud laughter, "I've got a dog in my head—hark, how it barks—bow, wow, wow!—Ha—ha—ha!"

"I've got a cat—mew!—mew!—mew! who'll catch the mouse? I feel it—mew!"

"Water! water! water! The world's on fire!—Fire, fire, fire!"

"Hush, you wretches!" exclaimed another voice, "I'm going to sing for my dinner—hush! hark!"

"Hark! the song—the song!" cried all the other voices together, while the singer began; and in a few moments her voice only was heard, wild and dismal beyond description, though not very loud, uttering words something like the following:—

"Hark to the bell, the merry, merry, merry bell,
It is his knell—the merry, merry knell!"—

"Ding, dong!—Ding, dong!—Ding, dong!"

—sung the other voices in a kind of doleful chorus. The singer resumed—

"Lullaby! Lullaby! Lullaby!
His head, oh, his head it is white—
All white! white!
—Dead, dead, dead!

—Sing you wretches!" They resumed—

"Ding, dong!—Ding, dong!—Ding, dong!"

The sun at that moment shone into the dreary room, while I was intently gazing on the miserable scene it disclosed. Mercy!—my flesh crept—I began to recognise in the singer, who occasionally looked wildly up into the sunshine—I could not be wrong—Mrs St Helen!

"Who is that?" I inquired faintly, turning away from the room, while my companion closed and secured the door.

"Mrs Jones is the performer, if it's she whom you mean?"

"Oh no, no, no! Her name is not, it never was Jones!" said I, feeling very faint, and moving as quickly away as possible into the open air.

"Well, certainly," said Mr B——, after considering a little, "it is strange enough; I have certainly now and then heard her mention *your* name, among others. So you know, very probably, her real name—Mrs St Helen?"

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He mentioned the name I dreaded to hear.

"I have had her these two years; she was removed hither from St ——'s by order of a General Ogilvie, whom perhaps you know, at whose expense she continues here."

I got into the open air, and began at length to breathe more freely. I protest that I never in my life encountered such a shock as that I had just experienced. He told me many sad, shocking things, which I shall not record.

Oh! merciful and just God, governor of the world, sometimes even in this life thy most tremendous wrath alights upon the heads of the guilty!

CONCLUSION

OF

THE DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN.

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